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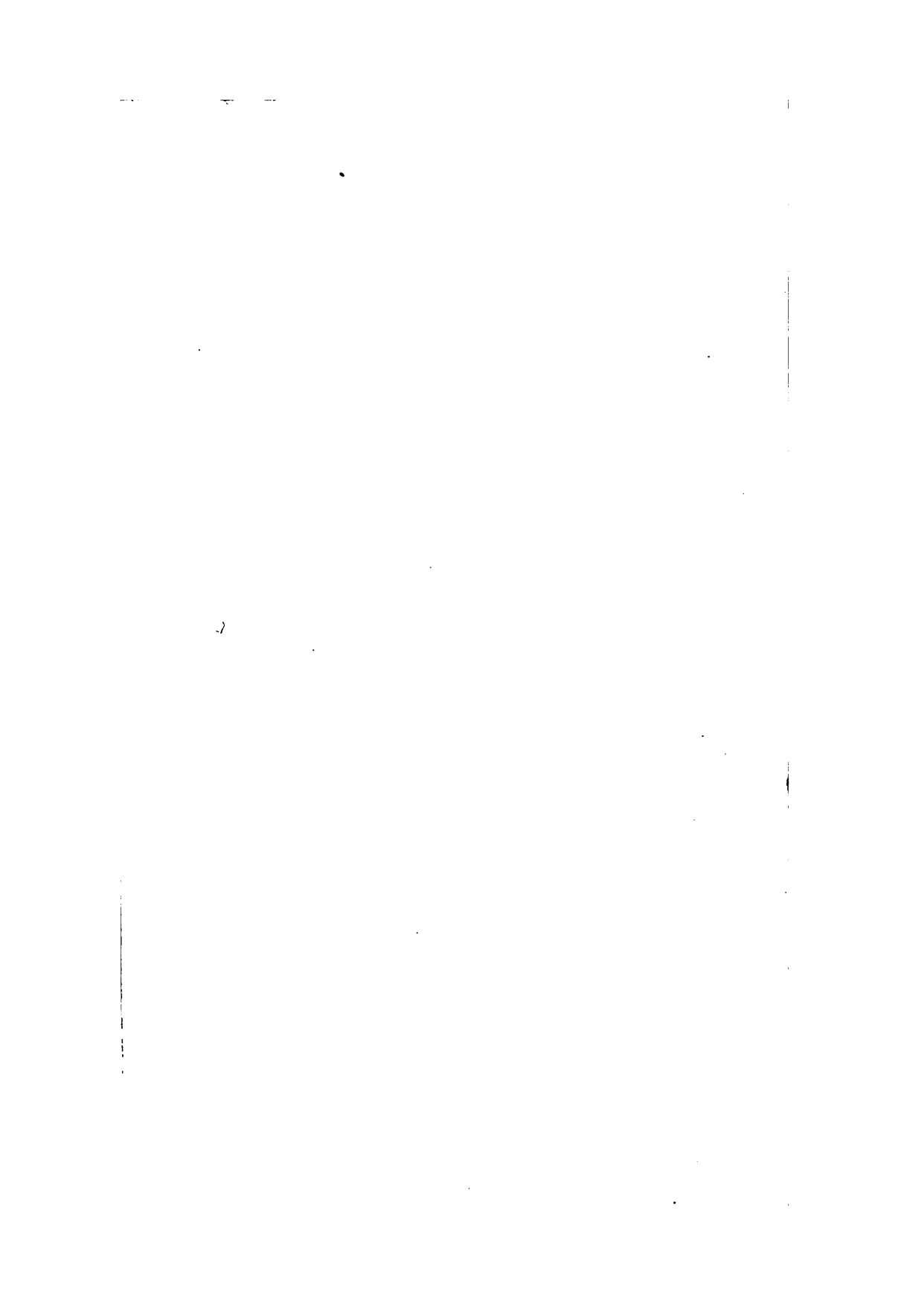
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1852.



PEQUINILLO.

CHAPTER I.

OUR etymologists have been greatly puzzled with the derivation of the word *mosaic*. They see in it a faint connection with the *musa* and *μῦσα* ; and yet don't know how to make out that a patchwork of pebbles has any affinity to a song, a poem, or a muse. Now, I will explain it to you ; and, as the very most appropriate place in the whole world, will choose the middle of

a prose romance for writing an essay upon Epic poetry.

The first great quality in poem, tale or history, is verisimilitude—that truthfulness of construction and detail, which, while it admits of infinite combination and variety, and does not pluck a feather from the wings of imagination, requires that imagination should fly aright, and not shock by impossibilities the inherent conviction in the mind of man. To attain this truthfulness, and to display it upon the greatest and best model, recourse must always be had to the high, poetical type—to the everlasting poem, continually in action around us—the course of human life—the grand march of events, either as they affect individuals, or society at large. Now, the whole of human life, the great scheme of Fate for every one and all, which thus becomes, to a certain extent, the model or archetype of every great poem, story, or history, consists of innumerable small

pieces—little acts, going on thousands of miles, and thousands of years distant from each other, but all firmly cemented together, and so artfully disposed, that the abstraction of any one piece would throw out and spoil the harmony and connection of the whole.

What is this but a mosaic?—a mosaic of events instead of pebbles? And, if an imitation of the truth of human life be necessarily an essential in every great poem, well might men extend the name *musaic* or *mosaic* to the poetical arrangements of stones which we find in ancient places. The mighty, polished barbarians, who have left such vestiges behind them, trod upon poetry ; and in the bath or the banquet-hall had a poem beneath their feet.

But now for a deduction. Whoever would write a good book, must consider he is composing a mosaic, and take care that he has got all his pieces in proper order. Nay more, though one principal

group may be in the middle of his picture, he must, from time to time, look around, and fly off here and there, to take care of his *tessellæ* in other places.

When one is resolved to pursue one's own way, there is nothing like having an intricate and long-winded excuse for it. The great majority of the world would rather, nine times out of ten, be convinced than bored; and therefore, when they see a reason of a couple of pages long, they submit meekly to any vagary the author is going to play, and doubt not he has good cause for it.

Thus, if you please, we will change the scene, and commence a new act of the drama in another place, and also with new characters.

There was a shop, in a court out of the Strand, which had a window looking into that great thoroughfare, although the door was round the corner. In the window of that shop, appeared a considerable number of very showy, and somewhat fantastic,

dresses, meant to represent the male costume of the reigns of various kings long deceased. There were the bobs and queus, the straight cut coats, and ornamental steel buttons, of various Georges ; the flowing perriwigs, brocaded waistcoats, square-cut, and laced neck-kerchiefs, the silk, the satin, and the uncut velvet coats, of William and of Anne; there were the indescribable anomalies which post-rebellionary Stuarts wore upon their heads, and the little less miraculous garments with which they clothed the rest of their persons. Leaping over the inter-regnum, came the dresses which Vandyck has glorified, and which only Vandyck could render probable ; and beyond that, a *mêlée* of costume, representing the ideas of various tailors, regarding the habits of Elizabeth, and Philip and Mary, and Henry the Eighth.

Above the windows where all this gaudy clothing appeared, was inscribed, "Isaacson, *Costumier*. Court and fancy dresses supplied on the shortest notice." And in a

corner pane of the window, was a card stating that wardrobes were purchased within, for ready money.

Isaacson might naturally be translated Jacob; but the name would have been more appropriate had it been Isaac's grandson; for the master of the shop was, in all respects, most decidedly one of the children of Israel. At this very moment he is bargaining, with a potent appreciation of the value of a penny, for a large and very handsome wardrobe, with an elderly man who stands boldly up to him.

"Why, dear me, my good sir, you are asking a very great deal too much," said the dealer, looking up in the man's face, and holding a coat upon his hand. "I know you are a very respectable man, and would not wish me to make a bargain by which I should lose; but fifty pounds for these clothes is really quite—quite—quite too much."

"All I know is," returned the other, "there are three suits of black, quite new—never were worn—and a whole quantity of other clothes into the bargain, as good as new. You are a rich man, Mr. Isaacson, and should not drive so hard a bargain."

"*I* rich! God bless you!" exclaimed the Jew; "why you ought to know better, my good friend. I can hardly scrape a living. Am I not obliged to let my first floor for a poor guinea a week, and live with my wife and children in the garrets?—No, no! I could not give anything like that.—I am very sorry we can't deal."

"So am I," said the other, beginning to pile up the clothes in more orderly fashion. "If you can't, some others can, I dare say."

"Why, look now," cried the dealer in cast clothes, snatching a coat from the pile, as if he had been the most injured man on earth. "You talk of new clothes that have never been worn. There's a great

tear in the shoulder, and a large stain in the side, not yet brushed out."

"That's not one of those I told you had never been worn," replied the other, sharply ; and then he paused for a moment or two, as if moved by some feelings he did not wish to appear. "For that matter, the coat is quite new too, bating the tear. It was never worn half-a-dozen times. Ah, curse it! It was an unlucky day when it was put on. But I don't count that for anything. It's torn. That's enough. What will you give for the rest, without counting that at all?"

"Why, twenty pound is five pound too much," said the dealer, in a hesitating tone, which showed some doubt as to the exact extent of the other's gullibility.

"Well, then, you cannot have them," returned his visitor, decidedly. "I would rather keep them myself."

"Look here, now," resumed the salesman, still attaching himself to the torn coat, and holding it up. "What's that worth?"

“Nothing at all,” exclaimed the other, snatching it from his hand, and throwing it to the farther end of the counter. “What are the others worth? *That* is the question. Fifty pound, if a penny.”

Now, time is of no earthly value to a Jew, or a New Englander, when he is making a bargain. The gain of a single shilling, of which he may very likely have many hundred thousands, is worth one whole day of those whereof he has so few.

The same story came over and over again; every separate piece of clothing was examined half-a-dozen times: when there was no hole in a coat, the Jew was sure to pick one; and then he bade ten shillings more—and ten shillings more—then a shilling, and even a six-pence, till at length his chapman, who was a plain, downright sort of person, began once more to fold the clothes up neatly, as if about to carry them all away. Then the bidding became more eager, on the part of the Jew; but the other replied nothing, continuing his

preparations for departure, and wrapping one bundle of the clothes into a large pocket-handkerchief.

Thereupon Mr. Isaacson pounced upon the other bundle, tore from it a coat, and, rushing with it to the window, examined the cloth as if he had some slight doubt of its excellence.

"Come, put that down here," said the other man, in a sulky tone. "I have no time to stand haggling with you all day. If *you* don't know what is a good bargain, *I* do. I can do without the money, and won't have any nonsense."

The Jew sighed, and returned the coat. He even suffered another bundle to be tied up, and the last to be piled, ready for tying. As he saw his friend was immovable, however, he exclaimed, with a semi-repentant look—

"Well, I will give five-and-forty, just because you are an old customer."

"Not a penny less than fifty," answered the other drily, knotting two of the ends

of the handkerchief together. "You know that is twenty pound less than they are worth; and I will not stand any more nonsense."

"I dont think I've as much in the house," muttered the Jew.

"Well, then, you must find it," retorted his visitor, in a decided tone.

"Forty-seven," said Mr. Isaacson, opening a till-drawer, and suffering 'a good deal of money to appear as a sort of bait to catch the other with.

"Fifty," persisted his companion, in an abrupt and resolute tone ; and, at the same time, he tied the other two ends of the handkerchief, and thrust his arm through the knot, as if about to carry the bundle away to a hackney coach which he had in waiting.

He had almost reached the door of the shop, when the voice of Mr. Isaacson called him back, saying—

"Well—well! I suppose I must have them, though I shall never make anything

by them, I am sure ; but, as you are an old customer—”

“Hang my being an old customer !” interposed the other.

“Just let me look at that coat in there again,” said Mr. Isaacson. But he was met by a flat refusal.

“You have looked enough,” returned the vendor. “If you don’t like them, don’t take them. If you do, pay up.”

The Jew went back to the drawer which he had quitted for a moment ; took out four ten-pound notes, and then began counting out golden coins, growing sadder and more morose at every piece he let fall upon the table ; till at length, raising his head, he said—

“Forty-eight is quite enough. I am sure I do not know what I shall do with them.”

“That is nothing to the purpose,” observed the other. “Will you have them, or will you not ? Fifty is the price, and nothing less,”

The other sovereigns dropped slowly down, were taken up by the seller, and the bundles pushed across to the purchaser.

The Jew looked amazingly pleased, as well he might ; for he had pleasure in a good bargain, and pleasure in bargaining ; and then, with a sweet smile, he asked—

“Hav’n’t you got any of the boots and shoes and linen and things ? There must be a great deal besides these.”

“I shan’t sell them, though,” answered the other. “I have no pleasure in this business, Mr. Isaacson ; and I never sold you anything with so sad a heart. I should not have done so at all ; but I wanted to make up a little purse for my Neddy, who is going out in an India ship.”

“You had better sell them all, and have done with it,” observed the Jew.

“No—no. I shan’t,” replied the other. “Good morning to you, Mr. Isaacson.” And away he went.

“Here, Ezra—Ezra !” cried Isaacson, as

soon as the other was gone ; and a lad of sixteen, very unlike the prophet, rushed out of the dingy nook behind.

“Take these, as I give them to you,” said Isaacson ; “fold them and put them on the top shelf.”

And then he proceeded, with the greatest care and minuteness, to dive into the pocket of every vestment he had bought ; being well aware, from experience, that vice, drunkenness, levity, sorrow, and poverty, engender a sort of carelessness, which is very apt to leave things, sometimes of value, in the pockets of breeches and waistcoats.

CHAPTER II.

WHILE the little group of incidents we have just mentioned was taking place in the Strand, two ladies, namely—for I do not intend to keep it a secret—Mistress Westwood and her daughter, Mary, sat together in a drawing-room of an hotel, looking out into the very quiet, but very charming, Square called Berkeley. Mistress Westwood appeared ill, anxious, and dejected; but oh, what a change had come upon poor Mary, even in one short week! The rich, warm colour of her cheek had faded away entirely, and she had become as pale as marble. The large, laughing hazel eyes

had, indeed, lost none of their lustre ; but the light they still contained was a sad one. She had become very thin, too, and her features, though still exceedingly beautiful, had lost their rounded softness, and become sharp and defined. A week seemed to have anticipated years, and changed the young girl into the care-worn woman. She sat with her head resting on her hand, in melancholy silence ; and Mistress Westwood, struggling with her own sorrows and anxieties, had striven, with all a mother's tenderness and a woman's skill, to win her daughter to converse ; for she knew right well that thoughts pent up in the bosom will rend their prison walls. She had tried many subjects ; and Mary had answered sweetly with a "Yes" or a "No," or some few short words, spoken with pain, and soon concluded.

Anything was better than this silence, Mistress Westwood felt. She knew on what Mary's thoughts were resting ; and, believing that it would be less painful, less

dangerous, that those thoughts should be spoken aloud, than suffered to prey upon her heart in silence, she, at length, turned to the subject that engrossed her daughter's mind, and spoke of it plainly.

"My dear Mary," she said, "you must endeavour to shake off this sadness—for my sake, you must, dear Mary. I never saw any selfishness in you, my child ; and you must not let grief make you selfish. You have acted rightly—wisely, my dear, in telling me all that has passed between poor Julian and yourself, and explaining to me why I was not told at once ; but now, my dear Mary, in duty to yourself, to Julian, and to me, you must rouse your energies and make a struggle. I have lost, within the last few years, all whom I loved but you—my own father ; him who was a second father to me ; and the husband of my early, only affection. I need comfort and consolation, Mary, as well as yourself."

Mary cast herself upon her mother's

bosom, and wept, sobbing forth the words, "It is that which is the bitterest pang of all, dear mother—to know what I ought to do, and yet feel myself utterly incapable of doing it. I think my heart will break in the struggle I make to conquer all its feelings."

Mistress Westwood somewhat mistook her daughter, and turned even paler than she was before. She knew not, for a moment, what to say, how to act; whether to give her any glimpse of hope, that might still linger in her own heart, or to try to crush out hope, and supply its place by a stern sense of duty. In the end, however, she did what was best—treated her daughter with full confidence; told her all she herself felt, all she herself thought.

"It is wrong, my dear Mary," she said, "to give way to such immoderate grief. We are still in doubt, and must be so till Mr. Ludlow's return. Where he is gone, what he is doing, we know not; but when he

comes back, we shall probably have some accurate information. I must not conceal from you, however, my dear child, that, although at first I thought the words which that very unpleasant woman uttered, might proceed from mere malice, and be without foundation, I have since spoken with several of the old servants who were in the family before I ever knew your poor father ; and I am sorry to say that their opinion—and especially that of Brand, the steward—confirms the tale. It is very sad to think of, Mary ; and nothing but positive evidence will make me fully believe the story ; but, at the same time, my child, while there is even a doubt, it is criminal to indulge feelings which were pure and innocent before ; and it is your duty to use this period of suspense to discipline your heart, so that, if the worst be true, you may be able to meet Julian as your brother—and only as your brother.”

Mary gazed at her mother for a moment,

with a bewildered and hesitating look ; and then, clasping her hands, she exclaimed vehemently,

“ Oh, mother, mother ! You mistake me. Were Julian to enter now, I could fly into his arms, and call him brother, and feel to him as a sister—what else have I ever felt ? But not to know where he is ; never to hear from him ; to have his character aspersed ; to have people say that he has been fighting a duel—a thing which in itself he abhorred—for an Opera dancer—a low, bad woman ; to have him traduced—for it is slander, I am sure—and to have no power of contradicting it, is very terrible. Indeed, indeed, mother, I love him as a sister, feel to him as a sister ; but I would be proud of my brother ; and this suspense and ignorance is terrible to bear.”

“ You have relieved my heart of half its load, Mary,” replied Mistress Westwood ; “ but, my dear child, you must not suffer your anxiety on Julian’s account to injure

your own health, as it has done. I doubt not that this is a slander that has been told of him. From all I have seen of Julian, I do not think the story likely ; yet, my dear Mary, we must not picture to ourselves men as they are not. They are made of harder and less delicate earth, Mary, than women. That which will tarnish and soil satin, leaves no spot upon iron ; and we prepare for ourselves bitter disappointment, if we expect men to be such as we are—or ought to be.”

Mistress Westwood sighed as she spoke. Perhaps there was at her heart a grievous feeling of regret at the breaking of one of the bright bubbles of imagination—at the passing away of a pure,} early dream.

“ As to Julian’s absence,” she continued, “ his unexplained absence—a thousand things may have occurred which would account for it easily, if we knew the whole ; and we must wait in patience for farther tidings ; for I see no means of obtaining

any intelligence; unless, indeed, I were to send some one to Paris."

"Oh do, do!" cried Mary, eagerly. "You cannot tell, my dear mother, all the things I fancy—all the things I fear. Within the last month or two, so many events have happened to shake my confidence in the future, that I feel as if a train of misfortunes had only just begun, which is destined to go on, from sorrow to sorrow, to the end of life."

"Mary, Mary—banish such thoughts," responded her mother; although she felt herself, but too painfully, how naturally such terrible doubts arise in the mind, under the pressure of grief and adversity. "It is a want of faith, my child—a want of that resignation which springs from faith. That which is probable, we have a right to anticipate, although, even there, we may often be mistaken; but we are not justified, because we have suffered in one instance, or in many, to allow imagination to conjure up evils, the existence of which

we have no just cause to believe. You have no reason, but Julian's absence and silence, for believing that any accident has happened to him."

"He may be ill," said Mary: "If this intelligence has reached him, which has reached us, I am sure it has made him ill. He may be in want of money, too," she added, in a lower tone; "for I know he had not much in Italy. In his letter, he said he had been obliged to pay a ransom; and you told me yesterday, that he had drawn nothing from the sum for which you had given him a credit, when he left the villa on that terrible morning."

Mistress Westwood mused; for she could not but admit that there was some truth in what her daughter said. She knew Julian's character well; and it seemed to her not at all unlikely that if, by any accident, the secret of his birth had reached his ears, it would drive him into a state of despair which would have very evil consequences. She judged that, in case of his wanting

money, as Mary said, he would sooner suffer any hardship than apply to her upon the subject ; that he might even fly from her—from Mary—from all the world who knew him ; and she drew no very inaccurate picture to her own mind, of the real state of his feelings and intentions, as we have represented them during the last few days of his stay in Paris.

She was still meditating upon what she ought to do in Julian's case, and what she ought to reply to Mary, neither to dishearten her, not to encourage false hopes, when her footman entered with a card in his hand, saying—

“ This gentleman, madam, wishes to see you very particularly. He said he supposed you did not admit visitors ; but perhaps you would make an exception in his case.”

Mistress Westwood took the card, and read aloud, “ Mr. Henry Denison ;” and Mary exclaimed instantly—

“ Oh, dear mother—that is the gentleman

who they say was Julian's second. I saw it in the newspapers."

"Let him come up," said Mistress Westwood, turning to the servant; and both mother and daughter looked anxiously towards the door, till Henry Denison entered.

He was a good deal changed in manner and in mood, since the reader last saw him in Paris. Always calm and self-possessed, with the demeanour of a man of the world, which had a good deal characterized him as a boy—for demeanour is formed earlier than people generally imagine—he had now become exceedingly grave, and there was a thoughtful and even anxious look upon his countenance, which was not natural to it. He gave a glance towards Mary, and then towards Mistress Westwood, and advanced direct to the latter, saying—"I have to apologize, madam, for intruding upon you; but I wish for information which probably none but yourself can give, and I am in such haste to

quit London again, that no time was afforded for written communications."

"Pray be seated, Mr. Denison," said Mistress Westwood. "Both my daughter and myself are exceedingly glad to see you; for perhaps you can give us information also, which no one else can supply. But first to your own question. What is it you wish to ask?"

"It is merely," replied Henry, "to enquire if you can inform me where I can find or hear of my friend and old school-fellow, Julian Ludlow?"

"Do you not know where he is?" exclaimed Mistress Westwood, in some alarm.

"No, indeed," replied Henry Denison. "He left me about a fortnight ago in Paris, after an unfortunate affair with Sir William Colefoxe, which you may have seen blazed about with unnecessary publicity in all the papers. His intention was, I know, to communicate with you directly, and to go down to Waldon. I have never

heard of him since ; and it is absolutely necessary that I should see him. I was kept several days under the surveillance of the police in Paris, till Sir William was judged out of danger. Immediately after my arrival in England, I was obliged to go into Buckinghamshire, to see a relation who is very ill—indeed, dying. Yesterday I came up to London, and went to Waldon, expecting to hear of my friend at the house of Mr. Henry Ludlow ; but nobody was there—both Mr. Ludlow and his wife having gone to Paris—I suppose on the news of this duel. I imagined, however, that you must know something of my poor friend Julian.”

“ We do not, indeed,” said Mistress Westwood, “ and are extremely anxious about him.”

“ So am I,” returned Henry, “ so am I. What can have become of him ?”

Mistress Westwood gave a glance towards her daughter, who had seated her-

self at a small table near the window, and was covering her eyes with her hand.

"I really do not know, Mr. Denison," replied the elder lady; "but I trust that no evil has befallen him. We know that Julian's principles were altogether opposed to duelling; and I think it very probable that, after this event, he may be disinclined, for a time, to visit friends who view that practice in the same light."

"I think not, my dear madam," rejoined Henry, quickly, and almost haughtily. "Julian Ludlow had no occasion to be ashamed of any part of his conduct, in very painful circumstances."

Mary started up, and came nearer to the table where her mother sat; but she trembled in every limb, and seated herself by the fire, with her hands clasped tightly together.

"I find," continued Henry, "that representations, as to the cause of this duel, and all the circumstances, have been made

here in London, and in some of the common journals of the day, which I and Major Fechton, who was on the ground with Sir William Colefoxe, have thought it necessary to contradict authoritatively. You will see our joint letter in to-morrow's newspapers; and all I need say at present, is, that Julian Ludlow, as a gentleman, and a man of honor, could not have acted in any other manner than that which he did. He saw a woman grossly insulted; he knocked down the insulter; and could not refuse to meet him after, without the charge of cowardice."

"But who was that woman?" said Mary, unable to restrain herself. "Was she not—"

She paused; and Henry Denison said, in a milder tone—

"She was a lady, Miss Westwood, whom Julian had known when they were both children; and let me add," he continued, with great feeling, "he could not have

shown the manly and gentlemanly feeling he evinced, in favor of a more amiable and excellent person. She has, to her misfortune, been placed in a situation of peculiar difficulty. She is a dancer at the Opera of Paris ; but I remember some words which Forsyth, the traveller, speaks of Italian women, and which apply equally to persons in her position. The traveller, I think, says, though I may not give his exact words, that an Italian woman, remaining faithful to an Italian husband, in the midst of Italian manners, is more virtuous than an English woman can possibly be ; and so I may say of persons who, like Mademoiselle Marguerite, preserve a pure and unspotted reputation in such an atmosphere as that of the Opera of Paris."

"Thank God !" said Mary to herself, in a low tone ; though Mistress Westwood, anxious to hear more, asked—

"But what took Julian to her house,

Mr. Denison ; for it was there, I hear, the quarrel occurred ?”

“ He went, madam,” answered Henry, rising to depart, “ upon business connected with some points of family history, of a very painful nature.”

Mary looked quickly up, comprehending at once, from Henry Denison’s words, that the hint respecting Julian’s birth which had come to her ears, had reached him also.

Mistress Westwood, however, gave a warning sign to her young visitor, with a glance of the eye towards her daughter ; and he turned away from the subject, adding merely—

“ At least, so I am informed. Of this, however, I am sure, that he had never before that night seen Mademoiselle Marguerite, since they were both children, and that he has never again beheld her ; for I paid my respects to her before I quitted Paris, and she enquired anxiously what had become of him. I must now take my

leave ; for I must return immediately to Daynton House."

"I hope Lord Daynton is not ill," said Mistress Westwood, in a courteous tone. "I have heard my husband speak of him. They were at College together, I believe, and he always esteemed and respected him highly ; although some estrangement had taken place between them, from causes which I do not know."

Henry Denison looked down upon the ground, and fell, for a moment or two, into a fit of thought, from which he aroused himself with a start, saying—

"They were very painful causes, my dear madam—what are vulgarly called family-jars. Mr. Westwood was, I believe, for a time, prejudiced against my uncle ; but, in the end, he discovered his mistake. And now, my dear madam, as I think it probable that you will see my friend Julian sooner than any one else in London, may I ask you, as a favor to me, to let him know, as soon as you have an

opportunity, that I am at Daynton House, and shall be exceedingly glad to see him there on business of importance, if he can come down for a few hours. I must not leave my uncle again to seek for Julian farther; but it is absolutely necessary, in consequence of events which have lately transpired, that I should see him as soon as possible."

"Oh, Mr. Denison," cried Mary, rising and approaching still nearer, "I do hope that there is no chance of this unfortunate quarrel being renewed, and fresh evils taking place, in consequence of the false statements which have appeared in the newspapers?"

"None whatever, Miss Westwood," replied Henry Denison, gazing at her with evident admiration, notwithstanding the effects of grief and anxiety visible in her face and person. "I, for one, would not consent to your—to Julian Ludlow—fighting Sir William Colefoxe again on any consideration. The man is a coward—I

do not in the least scruple to say so ; and his second knows it, and admits that it was with the greatest difficulty he got him to the field. You need be under no alarm on that score, I can assure you."

Before he had done, Mary had fallen into a fit of deep thought. The gap after the word "your—," at which he had hesitated, imagination filled up with the word "brother ;" and, for the first time, she felt the name unpleasant as applied to Julian Ludlow, and shrank from a consciousness that that name was not so dear as another might have been. Before she roused herself, Henry Denison was gone, and she found her mother's eyes gazing upon her with a look of tender affection, not unmingled with sorrow, indeed ; but yet less oppressed than at the beginning of their conversation.

"This must have been a relief to you, Mary," said Mistress Westwood. "Let us hope that other causes of anxiety will disappear like this : and now we will turn our

thoughts as to what is best to be done. It is clear that there is no use in farther enquiries in Paris. Nevertheless, if you wish it, my dear, I will send off Willet to make enquiries there. The system of passports is so complete and strict, that it is probable Julian may be traced."

"Oh, yes, dear mother," answered Mary. "Pray send at once, and write too—write to Julian. Tell him—I am sure you will tell him—that you are ready to receive him as a son—with the kindness and affection of a mother."

A slight flush passed over Mistress Westwood's cheek ; but, after a moment's thought, she answered,

"No, my dear Mary, I must not do that. In our present state of uncertainty, it would be wrong, and might lead to grave mistakes. We ourselves are in great ignorance of everything respecting Julian. *He* may be in greater ignorance still. I had better merely say, that we are most

anxious to hear of him, or to see him. Doubt me not, my child. I will make my letter kind and tender enough, such as may befit either a mother or a friend."

"I am sure you will," replied Mary, kissing her hand affectionately; "and now, dear mother, do not think me very selfish, if I say, let us return to Waldon as soon as possible. We might miss him—we might miss my brother; for he is certain to seek us there, and is not likely to look for us in this place."

"Well, be it so, Mary," answered Mistress Westwood. "But I am anxious for you to see a physician first, my dear girl. Indeed, I have sent for Doctor —— already; for your bodily health has suffered, Mary."

"Oh, I shall be quite well," returned Mary, "as soon as my mind is at ease about Julian. Indeed, I feel better, more cheerful, already. One anxiety is gone; and, though others may remain, the load is, at least, so far lightened."

Not long after, the daughter left the room, and the mother remained alone. Her thoughts, for the next half-hour, were deep, and somewhat bitter. She knew not what to believe, or how to act ; but, at length, she concluded that it would be better for all, if a meeting as brother and sister were to take place, as soon as possible, between Julian and Mary.

CHAPTER III.

WE must return to the inn at Sittingbourne, where the object of so much interest still remained. It was the fourth day, or rather the fourth night after Julian's arrival at the inn; and three persons were in the room where he lay: one of the surgeons of the village on one side of the bed; the host and the hostess on the other. Now, by a most blessed chance, of so rare occurrence as to be almost beyond human calculation, three really good people had met together on that spot—the host and hostess, and the doctor—all right worthy persons. Each had, perhaps, his or her

peccadilloes and little bad habits. The host evinced a very ardent desire to have his bill paid upon all occasions, and was possessed with a strong notion that, if people had a great partiality for anything, such as very old wine, or haunches of venison, it was expedient they should pay well for their desire. But he had one highly redeeming quality : he kept no pigs ; and all the broken victuals of the house went to the poor, with occasionally a good deal that was not broken at all. The hostess cherished a loving affection for London bonnets, and had no distaste for smart ribbons ; and, to say the truth, her broad, round, rosy face looked exceedingly well when she carried it to church in the last new fashion from Cranbourn Alley. However, her heart overflowed with a sort of milk that never spotted a ribbon yet. The doctor was as kind a hearted man as any person could be ; but he had been the surgeon of a cavalry regiment, and swore like a trooper. It is quite wonderful how

often he d——d people's souls in saving their bodies. He had no notion of mincing any of his opinions, and was ever ready to confirm them upon oath.

Poor Julian lay in the midst, between the three I have named, while a nurse, who had been hired to attend upon him, went upon some errand to one of the waiters. His eyes were partly closed, partly open ; and one might have thought that he was asleep, had it not been for a low sort of muttering which he kept up, of words not distinct enough to be comprehended. His face was as pale as ashes, and the fine features were sharp and drawn. He looked very like a dying man, indeed.

The doctor had his fingers on the pulse, and his watch in his hand ; and, the landlord and landlady looked anxiously across towards his face, which appeared, from behind the bed curtains, with a bright light streaming upon it, from a candle on a table near at hand.

"Is that d——d brute ever going to

bring the port wine?" asked the doctor, looking up.

"She has gone for it," said the landlord.
"She will be back in a minute."

"In a minute!" echoed the doctor. "She has been gone half-an-hour already—drinking it by the way, I'd bet, as she drank what was left this morning."

"Do you think he is in great danger, doctor?" asked the landlady.

"To be sure he is, madam," said the man of science, sharply. "Do you think any one would be such a cursed fool as to lie there muttering, and insensible, if he were not in great danger? Why, if he were well, he would get up and dance a hornpipe, or any other d——d dance."

"But what's his complaint, doctor?" asked the landlady.

"Why, a wound, madam, from a gun or pistol ball," said the Doctor, in the same sharp tone, "and erysipelas, and mortification, and low fever, in consequence; and if you don't get that port wine soon, he'll

go out before your eyes, like the end of a candle."

The landlady ran to the door, and luckily met the nurse coming in with a decanter in her hand, rubbed quite clean and bright with a glass-cloth, because she had been told to get it as quickly as possible. The Doctor snatched it rudely away from her, poured some out into a tea-cup, and then dropped it spoonful by spoonful into Julian's mouth. At first, there was no effort to swallow ; but the power of deglutition returned after a moment, and, at length, the whole cup was drained.

The Doctor felt the pulse again, and then nodded his head, with a look of satisfaction, saying,

"There's rally—there's rally in him yet. In half-an-hour he must have some more." And, setting down the cup, he came round to the other side of the bed, walked up to the fire-place, and turned his back to the fire, while landlord and landlady drew near to

him, looking up in his face, as if for the oracles of Fate.

A highly interesting conversation ensued.

"It's very strange," said the landlord, "that he has never been enquired for. What do you think, Doctor, is the cause of his being so bad?"

"Neglect," returned the Doctor. "Over exertion, sorrow, sadness, or some such devilry. Starvation, perhaps."

"Starvation!" repeated the landlord. "I can't think that, Doctor. No one need starve when he has a gold watch, chain and seals, a handsome ring upon his finger, and a diamond pin in his shirt—though he had but ten shillings in his pocket."

"You are thinking of your bill! Curse me if you are not thinking of your bill!" cried the Doctor. "You are always thinking of your bill. I'll answer for it, you have been calculating what the gold watch, and the ring, and the pin, would sell for. Well, are you all safe? Are you on the right side?"

“I wasn’t thinking of anything of the kind, Doctor,” said the landlord, with his face flushing slightly; “and if I did, there would be no great shame in it. I dare say you sometimes think who is to pay your bill, too.”

“D—n my bill!” exclaimed the Doctor. “Give him some more of that port wine, woman—if the watch and the ring will hold out. Mind it doesn’t get near your mouth.” And he added a very terrible adjuration, conveyed by no means in the most scrupulous language. Then, having worked his excitement somewhat clearer, he turned to the landlady, saying—

“It is extraordinary, good Mistress Ward, that nobody has enquired after this young gentleman. You told me, the other day, you recollected his face, but could not tell his name. Now I think—”

“Oh, but we have found out his name, Doctor,” interrupted the landlady. “There were some clothes in his great-coat pocket, and his linen is marked ‘Julian Ludlow.’”

"Julian Ludlow!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Why, what have I seen lately about Julian Ludlow? Hang me if that wasn't the name of the young fellow mentioned in the papers this morning!"

"What did they say about him?" cried the landlord and landlady in the same breath.

"Why, that he had shot Sir William Colefoxe, in a duel, in Paris," answered the surgeon. "What have you been doing with your eyes, that you did not see it as well as myself?"

"I hadn't time to look at the papers," said the landlord; "for this is justice day."

"Ay, nothing is ever done on justice day," said his wife, in a reproachful tone.

"My dear, I do my work as well as any husband in the country, justice day, or no justice day," replied the landlord, with his back up.

"There—don't get into a flatne," cried the Doctor. "You'll both have enough of

that by-and-bye. Now I'll tell you how it all is. I see it as clear as possible. This young fellow shot the other young fellow, and then ran away for fear of the consequences. He has been wounded himself, treated it as a scratch—all d——d fools do—has run to the coast without rest or sleep, come over in an open boat, paid all his money to the boatmen—set out to walk to London, and tumbled down in your passage. The next thing is to find out the names of his friends, and give them notice; for his life hangs upon the toss up of a sixpence. The next three days will decide; and it is better somebody should see him before before he dies. Put an advertisement in the papers, beginning 'Whereas a gentleman, named Julian Ludlow, &c.'—Has the coach passed yet?"

"Why, we know the name of one of his friends," said the landlady, not suffering her husband to reply—"the gentleman who would have the venison, you know, John—Mr. Whiteheart something."

"Marmaduke—you mean Marmaduke," returned her husband, crossly—"Marmaduke Knight. He's an Oxford scholar, Doctor; and I dare say, if we were to write to him, at Oxford, a letter would reach him."

"Send a messenger," said the Doctor, "up by the mail to-night, and down by the Light Blue to Oxford, to-morrow morning."

The landlord hesitated.

"Eighteen shillings from Sittingbourne to London—an unknown quantity between London and Oxford—food by the way—payment for trouble."

He began to think seriously about the watch and seals.

His wife understood the calculation going on, in a moment.

"Oh, hang it, never mind, John," she said. "I dare say you'll get paid."

"I'll send a messenger myself, and take my chance," said the Doctor. "There, hold your tongue, Mr. Ward—you'll be d—d to a certainty. Bring me pen

and ink and paper, and I'll write the letter."

"You had better come down to our parlour, sir," said the landlady.

"No, I won't leave that d——d woman with the wine, for a moment," said the Doctor.

"Lord bless you, sir, I wouldn't touch the wine," cried the nurse. "I can't a-bear it."

"If you can't, you tried hard to, break yourself in this morning," said the Doctor; "but in the devil's name get me some paper. We shall have the mail passing before all is ready—there's no time to lose I tell you. Come, Ward, stir your stumps, and don't stand sulking there."

The landlord, though he went to the door, did not move with any great alacrity, and his wife rushed past him ere he had reached the head of the stairs. She returned first also, and had clearly won the race; for Mr. Ward felt that he had been ill treated by the Doctor, just in proportion

as conscience told him he had been judged justly. Indeed, the Doctor's rubs were generally too close not to gall the skin a little.

When Mr. Ward re-entered, he found the worthy surgeon dashing off his letter with all the unhesitating promptness which he displayed in everything else. Two minutes sufficed for conception and production both. Never was man, woman, or child delivered of a letter so rapidly. When he had done, however, he turned to his two companions, with a certain degree of vanity—for we are all vain upon some point, and generally upon some of the worst points about us—and read the following letter to them, as if for approval, although he was perfectly certain that it must be approved.

“SIR,

“Being informed that you are a friend of a gentleman named Julian Ludlow, who has been taken seriously

ill upon the road to London, and not knowing the name of any other friend of his to whom I can address myself, I beg to intimate that he is now lying very dangerously indisposed at the Red Lion Hotel, in Sittingbourne. It is but right and proper that some friend or relation should be with him in his present situation. The landlord and landlady are remarkably good people; though *he* is exceedingly fond of his bill, and *she* of her ribbons. They will show the invalid every sort of kindness and attention; but the nurse being a drunken sot, and I not able to watch her as closely as needful, it would be as well to have somebody present, who would do for love what she does for money, and not drink the Port wine. The gentleman, also, may have to make arrangements, if he recovers his senses before death, as is probable.

“If you come yourself, therefore, you had better come quickly; and if not, I shall be obliged by your immediately informing Mr. Ludlow’s other friends or relations, both that he is ill, and where they

will find him, thus relieving us all here from a devilish deal more responsibility than any of us like.

“I have the honour to be,

“Sir,

“Your obedient servant, &c.”

“Now for sealing wax,” cried the Doctor, “and then let us get a messenger.”

“That’s done,” said the landlord. “Give me the letter—I’ll seal it and send it.—There’s the mail-horn coming along. We’ve just time, and no more.”

Thus saying, he took the missive, hurried away with it, and despatched a messenger in time to save the mail. But we must not pursue the course of that messenger to Oxford, merely saying that he performed his journey rapidly, and found Marmaduke Knight without any difficulty.

Now Marmaduke had a good heart, as well as a good stomach, though it must be admitted that the latter sometimes over-rode the former. He was constitu-

tionally timid, however ; and, although it so happened that the moment was propitious, and he could quit Oxford for a few days, without any breach of scholastic discipline, he hesitated a good deal how to act, and asked innumerable questions which elicited no distinct information ; for all the man knew, was, that he had to carry a certain letter to a certain address ; and there his function and his knowledge ended.

Good feeling, however, in the end got the better. Marmaduke determined to set out, and to set out at once ; and he made his way easily and rapidly to Sittingbourne.

Quiet reflection in a half empty stage-coach, left what imagination Marmaduke Knight had, at liberty to roam freely, and to suggest various troubles and dangers, which in the promptitude of his course he had forgotten. Before asking after the health of Julian at all, when he arrived in the little town, he enquired his way to the house of the surgeon ; but was not lucky

enough to find him at home. He was shown into a parlour, indeed, to wait; and, in a few minutes after, the Doctor appeared, driving a sort of surgical buggy, not to be mistaken. The Doctor, however, was in a great hurry; and a hurry always made him copious in expletives.

Marmaduke Knight met him, without the slightest knowledge of his character; and, after giving his name, he proceeded to ask about Julian's health.

"Why, hav'n't you seen him?" cried the surgeon. "He is better—a shade better; but very ill yet. You had best go to him at once. You can't do him any harm; for he won't know you."

"Pray, Doctor," said the young gentleman, with a certain degree of hesitation "what is the disease my friend is labouring under? Is it infectious?"

The surgeon gazed at him with a good deal of contempt. "Infectious," echoed he. "No; you need not be the least afraid. Go and see him—go and see him." And

then he muttered to himself, "Fools are very little subject to infection.—Go and see him," he repeated. "I will be over directly. You know where he lodges—there—just opposite."

Marmaduke Knight crossed over with no great alacrity of footstep; but his enthusiasm was greatly excited as he passed by the well furnished larder between the door of the passage and the bar room. He was received by good Mistress Ward, with the greatest kindness, and with much satisfaction; and she hurried him at once up to Julian's room, declaring that it would be the greatest possible relief to Mr. Ward, when he returned home, to find that one of the patient's friends had come to "be with him."

Marmaduke Knight, however, soon found that he could make nothing of the case by the aspect of the patient. He thought that Julian was looking exceedingly pale and ill; and, if he had trusted to his own opinion, he would have decidedly imagined

that his companion was at the point of death. The assurances of Mistress Ward, however, that her guest was very much better, relieved his mind ; and, descending quietly to a little sitting-room, he turned his thoughts at once to what was always a predominant subject in his mind.

"Will you have the goodness to let me see the bill of fare, Mistress Ward ?" he said. And, although Spring was still young and unconfirmed, he easily found means to pick out a very comfortable little dinner, which was ordered on the spot. He then suffered memory to bring back the recollection of all the causes which had carried him thither, and asked himself the important question, "What shall I do next?" It was a matter of much consideration ; and Marmaduke Knight, having always found it one of the most difficult tasks in life to decide for himself, when there was nobody present to advise him, met the question he had propounded to himself, by resolving to do nothing.

"I don't know who I could write to, but the Westwoods," he said to himself; "and they are in great trouble now, poor people! Very likely he may recover, and then I should only frighten them without cause; and very likely he may die, and then I can get my mother to break it to them. It won't be much worse to hear that he is dead than that he is dying. I will just wait a day or two, and see how it turns out.—This is a comfortable inn enough. One might be in worse quarters."

CHAPTER IV.

LET me place the reader in the Strand, at the most crowded moment of the day ; that is to say, about two o'clock. The living tide was pouring by, on the side pavement and in the centre, so thick, that, had Adam been able to see his posterity, he would have wondered how they ever escaped being jammed into mortar. But wisdom and habit enabled one man going one way to glide past a thousand others going another way, without the slightest difficulty ; and caused two complete currents of solid, corporeal beings to flow in

different directions, without creating a whirlpool.

In the midst of these, was a stout, exceedingly well-built, and active man of the middle age, making his way rapidly along with the stream which ran from Temple Bar towards Charing Cross. He seemed anxious to pass every one walking in the same direction as himself; but it was a difficult undertaking; for if the waggons of Attila's Huns were formed into a rampart, almost impassable at Chalons, the carts and carriages of the Londoners formed a barrier quite impassable in the carriage-way; and the crowd on the pavement was, as I have said, tightly wedged together. From time to time, a little gap, indeed, would appear; and then Doctor Pequinillo, (for of him we are speaking) would make a dart forward, like a water spider on the top of a stream, and get a little in advance of the four or five people previously before him.

During one of these springs, his face

seemed to attract the attention of an old gentleman going in a different direction, who stopped, throwing the man behind him out of the line; stretched forth his hand to touch the Doctor's shoulder, was whirled suddenly round before he could accomplish it, by a vehement stock-broker, hurried on by three-and-a-half per cent; turned off from his own course; called after the Doctor in a voice which was drowned by the London thunder; and then strove to follow him, though the attempt seemed to be perfectly hopeless. A good natured butcher's boy, however, coming in the opposite direction, with a sirloin of beef, and three pounds of fat mutton chops, in a tray upon his shoulder, having nothing on earth to think of, perceived the eager gesticulations with which the old gentleman accompanied his call to Doctor Pequinito, and caught hold of the arm of the latter, saying,

"Hullo, Mister Mustachios! There's sum un' a hollerin' arter you."

Turning round, Doctor Pequinillo had his hand soon grasped in that of Monsieur de Benis.

"I want to speak with you, particularly, my dear sir," said the old gentleman. "I cannot express how delighted I am to have met with you."

"I really cannot stop now," returned Doctor Pequinillo, as the old Frenchman, taking hold of his arm, and proceeding in the same direction with himself, threatened to delay his progress by the slowness of his own march. "I am in a tremendous hurry. I have lost all trace of a young friend, the gentleman who was with me when I saw you at Auxerre; and I am exceedingly anxious about him."

"I can tell you something of him," said Monsieur de Benis.

"Can you—can you?" cried Doctor Pequinillo, eagerly. "Upon my life, I thought he had gone mad, and committed suicide."

"Well, come into my lodging," said

Monsieur de Benis. "It is not above a hundred yards farther up, and I will tell you all that I know of your friend. We were fellow-travellers from Saint Denis."

"Well, this is delightful!" cried Doctor Pequinillo, in a greatly relieved tone. "It is most extraordinary that I should lose sight of him—I never lost sight of anything or anybody in my life before. I always know where to put my hand upon everything. But who would have thought to meet you here, sir?—What brought you to England? How long have you been here? Where's your daughter?"

To none of these questions did Monsieur de Benis reply; for he was at this moment approaching rapidly the door of that Mr. Isaacson whom I have already commemorated; and, to say the truth, the old gentleman's head, accustomed to the quiet streets of Auxerre, was somewhat in a whirl with the noise and confusion of London.

"Here, come in here," he said, entering the door of the shop, (for the house had none other,) and leading the way towards a door on the right-hand side, after passing the first counter.

Mr. Isaacson merely gave a glance of his eye to Monsieur de Benis, and took no farther notice ; but continued studying the papers lying before him on a tall desk, and scratching his black head of hair vehemently.

Through the door, and up-stairs, went the old French gentleman and his visitor, and then into a neat drawing-room, where Mademoiselle de Benis was seated, reading.

"Here is our excellent friend, Doctor Pequinillo," said Monsieur de Benis, as soon as he entered ; and the young girl started up, and almost cast herself into the Doctor's arms.

"Wait a minute—wait a minute," continued Monsieur de Benis, in a high state

of agitation and delight. "Take a seat, Doctor. I will be back in an instant."

And he hurried into a room behind. In less than a minute, he returned with some bank notes in his hand ; and, approaching Doctor Pequinillo, he ejaculated, with strong emotion—

"In the very first place, my dear sir, let me repay you what you so generously lent me. You conferred a service upon a fellow creature, a stranger to you, which will be rewarded hereafter in a place where we shall all know each other."

"No, no," cried Doctor Pequinillo, putting aside the money with the back of his hand, "I really do not want it. Why, I am a rich man, on the very contrary principle to that of patriarchal days. I mean, I have no children. My quiver is quite empty of arrows, and there's money in it instead.—I really do not want these notes. I will let you know when I do."

"Nor do I want them either, my good friend," replied Monsieur de Benis. "And

I, too, am a rich man now; for I have got more than I could desire."

"Indeed!" cried Doctor Pequinillo, with all his enquiring faculties suddenly roused to action. "Is it fair to ask how that has happened?"

"I can tell you in a few words," replied the old gentleman. "Perhaps you may have heard that I emigrated to this country during the Revolution, and taught French here for my livelihood. I found one of my countrymen from the neighbourhood of Strasbourg, a Monsieur de Schweinfurth, established in a nice village, some five-and-twenty miles from London, and living very comfortably. His wife, who was an Englishwoman, kept a large and very fashionable school for little boys, in which she was assisted by her two daughters. The husband was a good and ingenious man; but he had not the art of teaching; and, having known him in former years, I was engaged to give French lessons at the school. An affection sprang up between

myself and the youngest daughter, to which Madame Schweinfurth, or Swanforth, as she called herself, was greatly opposed, simply because she thought me too old. Her husband, however, died suddenly, leaving the whole of his property to her; and what between her own savings, and his, that property was very considerable. I am sorry to say that I did what was wrong: I persuaded poor Eliza to marry me without her mother's consent. Madame Schweinfurth was highly indignant, and left us to struggle for ourselves. It was a hard struggle, too," continued the old man, with a sigh; "but it only lasted a few years; for the blessed Restoration came, and I was restored to competence, at least. I instantly went over to France with my wife and child; and there we remained, without ever hearing anything more of her family till I lost my poor companion, a short time ago. Then distresses came upon me quick and fast; but you must know that in Auxerre there is a reading-room,

where one English paper is taken ; and there I happened to see the other day an advertisement stating, that if Eliza, the daughter of the late Mary Ann Swanforth, if she were living, or her heirs, if she were dead, would apply to a lawyer's house in Gray's Inn, she or they would hear of something to their advantage. Luckily, a young relation had paid me some money that he owed me ; and thus I had enough to come over to this country, hoping, yet doubting, that fortune might befriend me at last. To make my story short, however, I found, on going to Gray's Inn, that my wife's mother had died without a will, and that consequently my child was heir to one half of her property. It amounted in all to near eighteen-thousand pounds ; and I must say that nobody could have behaved better in the business than my poor sister-in-law, Sophia, who took every means to find us out, and exerted herself very much, though she is in sadly delicate health."

" I congratulate you, with all my heart,"

cried Doctor Pequinillo, "and have no scruple in taking the money now. Not that I want it, in the least, M. de Benis ; but because, if I judge you right, it would be a greater burden to *you* to keep it, than to *me* to receive it—But let me see—Madame Swanforth—why Julian Ludlow was at her preparatory school."

"Then you have known him very long?" said Mademoiselle de Benis.

Doctor Pequinillo mused for two or three minutes, with the question still lingering in his ear.

"From his first infancy," he answered, at length. "I might almost say from his birth—yet I must not say that, either, as it is the very facts regarding his birth which now puzzle us. Monsieur de Benis, perhaps you can help us in this matter—but first of all, tell me where is Julian? You said he had come over with you."

"Where he is at present, I really cannot say," replied Monsieur de Benis. "We have not seen him for nearly three weeks."

"Good God!" exclaimed Doctor Pequillo, starting up, and walking up and down the room in considerable agitation. "I had hopes you knew where he was. This is very sad—this is very terrible. I really am seriously alarmed."

Monsieur de Benis and his daughter witnessed the extreme agitation of their visitor, not only with surprise, but with sympathy, and gazed at him, not knowing what to say, or how to offer any consolation. Suddenly, however, the Doctor paused in his walk; and, taking a chair nearly opposite to Mademoiselle de Benis, but not far from her father, he said, in a sort of narrative tone,

"I must explain to you, my good friend, that peculiar circumstances have very much interested me in this young gentleman. I first saw him quite as an infant, and became acquainted with circumstances regarding his birth, full of doubt and mystery. Whether it was that my imagination was excited—for the accessories

were both painful and touching, and the scenes of that night I shall never forget—or whether it was something in the child itself, which connected itself with the latent sympathies that are bound up in every man's nature, as a part and parcel of his being, I cannot tell ; but certain it is, I have felt for that boy as I have only felt for one other person upon earth. Picture to yourselves a small lower room in a quiet village house, with a dead child, a few days old, lying on a cushion, to be placed in a coffin prepared by its father and myself : a mother, raving in severe fever above, attended by a drunken and a doting nurse, and calling for ' her child—her child : ' the father and husband almost frantic below with grief for the loss of his infant, and fear for the safety of his wife ; and a dim candle lighting our pale faces, as with trembling hands he placed the little coffin by the side of the sofa, in order to move into it the corpse of his first-born. Then suppose the door to open.

suddenly, and a gentleman, whom we both knew well, to enter, to draw the father aside, and, with a face as pale as his own, to tell him something in his ear. Then a short lapse, during which that gentleman was once more absent ; and then his return, bringing with him, well wrapped up, a beautiful babe, apparently a few days older than that which had been lost. Then imagine all that followed—the laying of the new found child in the cradle of the dead one—the deceiving of the drunken nurse, by persuading her that the child had recovered from a fit—the mingled joy, and sorrow, and some feeling of shame, experienced by the husband, when he witnessed the satisfaction and relief of his wife, even in her delirium, at hearing the false tale of her child's restoration ; then, the secret funeral of the poor, dead infant, by the pale light of a watery moon, in the church-yard hard by ; and then, our return to gaze upon the warm and glowing face of the living child, and

mark, perhaps fancifully, in its features, lines that we both knew full well. Can you suppose that I could ever forget such scenes, or lose my interest in that child?"

"Never—never ; of course," cried the old gentleman and his daughter, both at once.

"And is this the history of Mr. Julian Ludlow ?" asked Monsieur de Benis.

"It is," answered Doctor Pequinillo ; "and that history has lately become complicated by events which I cannot dwell upon here and now. There is much reason to believe that his birth is such as to destroy all his dearest hopes—to leave him in a state of desolation and despair, for which I know no remedy. Time himself, the great restorer, I fear, will have but very slow effect. It became necessary to give him a hint of his situation lately in Paris ; and the effect was terrible. It seemed to change his character, and to make the bright, impetuous young man suddenly stern and remorseless. He fought a duel there ; shot his adversary ; and, in some

fear of the consequences, was returning as privately as possible to England, when he travelled with you. I fear very much, that the complication of so many misfortunes, one intertwining itself, as it were, with another, may affect his health or his reason; and that the deep depression into which he has fallen, may end ill."

"His leaving us in the way he did at Dover, was certainly very strange," said Mademoiselle de Benis.

"Then he left you—he left you at Dover?" cried Doctor Pequinillo, eagerly.

"He did," answered the old gentleman, "though he had promised to go on with us to London, and perhaps take up his abode with us here. From the landlord, I heard that he intended to walk to town, which surprised me greatly. I feared that he might have some difficulty in regard to money-matters; and, had there been a possibility of tracing him, I would have offered him assistance from my own purse, as far as it went."

"Oh, he had plenty of money—he had plenty of money," said Doctor Pequinillo. "He had drawn upon his banker here, in London, just before he left Paris, and had got the draft cashed, to my knowledge. Your account of him alarms me greatly, or rather confirms my previous fears. Then Dover was the last place at which you saw him ?—I will set off by mail to-night."

He rose as he spoke ; but Monsieur de Benis stopped him, saying,

"You told me that I might assist you in something. Pray let me hear how."

"It will probably be of little use," said Doctor Pequinillo, in a sad tone. "However, the matter is very simple. We are uncertain in regard to Julian's birth—that is to say, there is still some doubt—a doubt which had better be removed altogether. Now, as he was taken to Mistress Swanforth's school by the gentleman to whom I have alluded as having brought him to Mr.

Ludlow's house, it struck me that amongst your mother-in-law's papers there might be found some record of the transaction—perhaps some memorandum of the story that was told her when he was put under her charge.”

“That will be easily ascertained,” said the old Frenchman. “She was exceedingly precise and methodical; and I doubt not that every letter or paper she has ever received, regarding her pupils, has been carefully preserved. Thus we may gain some information. But where can I give it to you, if you are going to Dover?”

“I have a little comfortable lodging in Maddox Street, Hanover Square,” replied Doctor Pequinillo, “which I retain wherever I may be. Anything sent there will reach me.—Stay, let me put it down. Forgive me, Mademoiselle, for using your pen.”

And, writing his address on a piece of paper, he took a kindly leave of Mademoiselle de Benis, and quitted the

room, looking at his watch to see how much time he had to spare, and followed by Monsieur de Benis, who was determined, with old-fashioned courtesy, to see his kindly visitor to the outer door.

CHAPTER V.

DOCTOR PEQUINILLO'S step, when he began to descend the stairs, was quick and impatient ; but before he had reached the bottom, it became slow and thoughtful. He took not the slightest notice of M. de Benis, who followed him ; but seemed to fall into a deeper and deeper reverie as he advanced into the shop. One of those fits of absence was upon him, which sometimes seize upon men of very active and energetic minds, when questions are before them of such difficulty as to require, for their solution, the abstraction of every thought, and

almost every sensation, from external objects. Men are then really in that condition which is fabled of the somnambulists, living in a world which they see and know not ; but seeing and knowing things undiscoverable to other eyes, by an internal sight, separate from that of the mere body.

Doctor Pequinillo fixed his eyes full upon Mr. Isaacson, who was still poring over papers and books ; but the Doctor did not see him in the least. He walked quietly up to the counter, took hold of a regimental coat that was upon it, and fingered the buttons, without knowing that he was touching anything.

Mr. Isaacson wondered very much, and was moving down to ask him if he could serve him with anything, when, to his amazement, Doctor Pequinillo took up a large pair of shears that lay upon the counter, and swallowed them before his eyes. A brass thimble met the same fate ; and a goose, which was standing on

an iron stand close by, might probably have passed the identical way, as a sort of dessert, if Mr. Isaacson had not suddenly run up, exclaiming, "Good gracious, sir! what are you doing?"

Doctor Pequinillo started, and woke from his reverie.

"Don't be alarmed, my good sir," replied he. "I don't want to steal anything. You will find your goods in that hat."

Mr. Isaacson instantly looked into the hat, and found the shears and thimbles; not at all digested.

"You are a conjuror, sir," said he.

Doctor Pequinillo quietly nodded his head, still partly absorbed in his meditations.

"And yet I begin to think I am no conjuror, either," he said, cogitating aloud, "otherwise I should have discovered, twenty years ago, whether Julian Westwood ever had a son or not."

He looked round to M. de Benis while he spoke, and seemed to address him, if he ad-

dressed any one ; but Mr. Isaacson took upon himself to reply.

"No, sir, that he never had ; I can answer for it."

"How do you know that ?" asked Doctor Pequinillo.

"Because I do," returned Mr. Isaacson, with all the force of female logic.

"There are many persons, my good friend, who would give you a thousand pounds, if you could prove that," said Doctor Pequinillo, turning away with a look of some contempt ; and then, addressing M. de Benis, he walked with him to the door of the shop.

"There were always two things, my good friend," the Doctor said, "which spurred my spirit to the full gallop—namely, to find out a trick, or to solve a problem. Now this inclination of mine might have made me one of two professions—either a conjuror or a mathematician. It pleased God that I should not be a mathematician ;

and here I am. But still the same spirit is in me ; and this problem I will solve, if it can be solved."

"I do hope," said the Frenchman, "that I shall be able to help you ; and I beseech you, my excellent friend, to let me hear from you if you obtain any intelligence whatsoever of our travelling companion."

Doctor Pequinillo promised, and, without taking any farther notice of Mr. Isaacson, turned away under the influence of a great and detrimental prejudice, too common to Englishmen of all classes. He had an invincible dislike to a Jew ; undervaluing even his intellect, and looking upon him merely as a man born to accumulate small gains ; forgetting that, if the huckster spirit is more common amongst the Israelites than other people, it may be easily accounted for by the prophesied contempt and oppression to which they have been subject for so many ages ; and overlook-

ing, altogether, the many instances of splendid abilities and noble benevolence which the Hebrew race has produced.

However that may be, when the worthy Doctor had passed upon his way, hurrying up the Strand with great impetuosity, M. de Benis turned his steps back towards his own apartments, with the intention of taking his daughter to her aunt's house, to enquire into the particulars of Julian Ludlow's early school days. As he passed by the counter, Mr. Isaacson beckoned him, and asked, in a pleasant tone—"for sufferance is the badge of all his tribe"—what was the name of the visitor who had just left him.

"He is a charming clever man," said Mr. Isaacson: "a little quick and self-conceited; but clever—very clever."

"His name is Doctor Pequinillo," said M. de Benis, "and he lives in Maddox Street.—Have you anything to say to him?"

"No, no—nothing particular," replied

Mr. Isaacson. "I only thought that, as he is a conjuror, I might get him to take the splendid suit that was made for Signor Gingerelli just before he broke his neck in balancing sixteen chairs, one upon another, on the slack wire. He never wore it, so help me Got—He never wore it one single day ; and it is quite as good as new ; for I had it all done up in three layers of silver paper, that the spangles might not get tarnished."

M. de Benis turned away, somewhat disappointed ; for, to say truth, he had entertained a hope that Mr. Isaacson might afford some information, of a definite character, regarding matters of which he had spoken so boldly.

Elise de Benis was quite willing to set out at once ; and a hackney coach having been procured, she and her father were rolled slowly on, at statute pace, to the cottage which Miss Swanforth possessed in the suburban rusticity of Camden-town.

The moment the name of Julian Ludlow was mentioned to her, she recollected him well, and called him a dear little boy. She thought, too, that amongst her mother's papers might be some memoranda concerning him ; for Mrs. Swanforth had been a prudent and discreet lady, who received all the information she could get, recorded it with scrupulous accuracy, and yet communicated it to no one at all likely to gossip of it out of doors.

Three large chests were soon produced, filled with papers ; and M. de Benis and his daughter, aided by Miss Swanforth herself, dived into the recesses of the first and second box without much success. At length, in the third, they came to a bundle tied up and labeled as " Letters to and from Robert Westwood, Esquire, concerning Master Julian Ludlow." The epistles were exceedingly good, and included a number of excellent hints regarding a boy's education ; but none of them contained the

least allusion to Julian's birth ; and, after they were all examined, nothing remained but a small memorandum book, filled with notes of the boy's expenses, and other matters apparently of no importance. M. de Benis looked through it cursorily, and Miss Swanforth gave it a glance, saying—

“ Oh, that is the bill book. One was kept separate for each of the boys.”

Mademoiselle de Benis took it up, looking at it apparently as carelessly as the other two, till, on the last page, she suddenly paused, and read it with great attention. She had been taught by her mother to write, to read, and to speak English as her native language ; and a few words, which, perhaps, in his less perfect knowledge of the tongue, had escaped the attention of her father, instantly attracted her own.

“ Here is something—here is something

important," she said ; and proceeded to read aloud, as follows :—

"14th. September, 180—. Memorandum.
Mr. Julian Westwood called to see little Julian Ludlow. His manner very strange—his affection for the child peculiarly so. Asked me particularly to remark and bear in mind, so that I could swear to it at any after period, a large mole on the boy's right shoulder just below the neck. The mark is very distinct, and somewhat peculiar—nearly a triangle, not round as those marks generally are, like the one on my own upper lip. Mr. Westwood said that it might be a matter of great importance one day. I cannot help having my suspicions. Still, I do not think that Mr. Westwood, would countenance anything that is wrong, senior, especially as the child was placed under my charge by his desire. N.B.

—The child has also a scar just behind the right ear.’”

“ This may, indeed, be important,” said M. de Benis. “ Probably you will allow me, Sophia, to bring a friend to see this book ?”

“ Oh, take it—take it,” said Miss Swanforth. “ It is of no use to me. As to the boy, I think I could swear to him anywhere, even now. He had beautiful curly hair; and the mole on his neck I have seen a dozen times.”

“ He has beautiful curly hair still,” said Mademoiselle de Benis.

Her aunt gazed at her with a smile, and the color rose in the young girl’s cheek, with those first sweet sensations of womanhood, so soon lost in stronger, more painful, more dangerous emotions.

Monsieur de Benis was satisfied, however, that he had got a prize, and carried the book away, to send it to Doctor Pequinillo, firmly believing that the

piece of information he had obtained would afford great satisfaction, when, in reality, it formed but one link in a long chain of evidence, ending in the most painful conclusion to Julian Ludlow and his sincere friend.

CHAPTER VI.

IN the days of which I write, the world moved round the sun at the same rate that it does at present. It might be the millionth part of a second faster or slower, for aught I know, as I am but little of an astronomer ; but I think it has been clearly proved by those who understand such matters, that it went at about the same rate. The men and women upon it, however,—nay, the sheep, the oxen, and a great number of other four-footed animals—went very much slower, on many occasions, than the denizens of earth do at present. Whether they effected

less, whether they enjoyed less, whether, in reality, they lived less, I cannot take upon me to say ; but certainly they performed everything at a more easy rate, and took time enough to do everything well, whether in fact they did it well or not. In those days there was no hurrying rush into a railway station, to gobble up, with the greatest rapidity possible, a certain portion of scanty and unsavoury viands, delivered by the hands of oversmart young ladies in cotton velvet gowns ; there was no fear of the accursed railroad bell ringing just at the moment when we are half choked by the end of a Norfolk roll ; there was no burning our throats with scalding coffee, in order to rush back to our seats in time ; there was no swallowing down, at one gulp, a bottle of petulant liquorice juice, mixed with quassia, in the fond belief that it is porter, and never discovering our mistake till the next morning. Oh, no ! The mail from Dover to London set out at its appointed hour ;

and a fast coach it was, reaching the metropolis somewhere about six o'clock in the morning: the mail from London to Dover just arrived at its destination in time for the traveller to miss the early packet. Now, as these two coaches travelled the same road, it must be self-evident to the reader that there was a point at which they were obliged to pass each other; and it was so arranged, skilfully and judiciously, that the point of passage was at an inn where the travellers by both could sup. It might have been more convenient for the above named travellers to sup earlier, and at different places; and far more pleasant for drowsy waiters and winking chambermaids to serve guests at an hour not so late; but so it was. The arrangement suited the coachmen of the mails, and the proprietors thereof; and neither travellers, waiters, nor chambermaids, were consulted upon the subject.

It was at the side of the down mail, as

it was called, that Doctor Pequinillo, with a small valise beside him, accosted a stout, elderly, rosy-faced man, in a very broad-brimmed hat, and a coat of multifarious capes, enquiring if he could have the box-seat. The scene of the colloquy was Holborn, where many of the mails stopped for a few moments ; and the north-east wind, blowing sharply up the street, rendered the box-seat not the most desirable position about the coach. The answer was therefore in the affirmative : the Doctor took the place thus bespoken ; and, as soon as one half of the head of the coachman had been enveloped in a voluminous shawl-handkerchief, he also mounted the box, and drove away, rattling with very tolerable velocity over the stone-paved streets of the capital.

A certain portion of heat seemed to be generated by, or extracted from, the lights in the shops, and the multitude of people moving in the streets ; but, when all these were passed, and the mail was hurrying

along through certain dark spots which then lay upon the Deptford Road, the coachman could not forbear grumbling forth from the depths of his handkerchief, "Cold night, Sir!" to which Doctor Pequinillo heartily responded.

When Blackheath Hill was mounted, the Green Man passed, and the Heath itself surrounded the traveller on all sides, the oracle spoke again, saying,

"Mighty cold night, Sir."

"True," returned Doctor Pequinillo. "Driving must be chilly work on such nights as these."

"Bless you, no, Sir," remarked the coachman. "I always keep my daddles well garnished ; for fingers will freeze ; and then I wrap this handkercher round my chin—always take care of the chin, Sir. If you take care of the chin, all the rest of the body will take care of itself. The chin—depend upon it—the chin is what keeps all the rest warm. I never knew a man get any harm who took care

of his chin, and kept the inside of him warm with just the least little thought of a something, while they are changing horses. Better have a handkercher. Sir. I can lend you one. I always carry three or four." And, at the same time, taking both reins and whip in his right hand, he dived, with his left, into an abyss in his vast great coat, and brought out another shawl, precisely similar to that round his own throat.

Doctor Pequinillo willingly accepted the loan, and soon felt the benefit of the coachman's advice—which, believe me, reader, is good under all circumstances. A gentle glow spread from his reviving chin down his chilled neck, over the *pomum Adami*, to the clavicle, extended over the chest, visited the diaphrag, and was comforting the epigastric region, when three elms, a swinging sign, and a blazing lantern, appeared in view ; and, a moment after, the coachman squared his elbows, doubled up

his horses into a heap, and said, in a confidential tone,

“Stop to supper here, Sir—half-an-hour—forty minutes if the supper’s good—up coach not in yet—ay, here she comes,”—for mail coaches, like men of war, are all females.

By this time the reins were thrown down, the stable-men at the heads of the horses, the heels of one of the leaders sent up into the face of the wheelers, in the joyful consciousness of an approaching stable, and the other coach dashing up to a spot a little beyond the first, while the guard with one foot upon the step of his pinnacle, like a herald Mercury, was blowing an unnecessary trumpet in the ears of night.

Doctor Pequinillo was slow in his movements—unusually so for him ; but he was disentangling himself from an enormous cloak, one of the tassels of which had got snared in the rail of the seat. The coachman looked up at him. The head ostler looked up, also, and, with a grin to the Mr.

Weller of the Dover Road, demanded if he should bring the gentleman a ladder.

"No, I thank you," replied the Doctor, now disrobed ; and, at the same moment, much to his surprise, the man of pails and peck measures found the Doctor's foot alight gently on his shoulder, and saw him an instant after stand firm beside him.

"That's *my* ladder," said Doctor Pequillo ; but, in executing this descent, he slightly brushed against a gentleman and lady who had got out of the other mail ; and, apologizing for what he had done, he walked into the inn along with them.

"This way, gentlemen—this way, sir—this way ma'am," cried a waiter, with a mechanical sort of vociferation ; for his eyes were full of sleep, and he looked as if he were walking about in a dream. "Supper's quite ready. Cold night, sir."

The latter words, though probably as mechanical as the rest, were addressed to Doctor Pequillo, possibly in virtue of the coachman's shawl-handkerchief which still

covered his neck and chin, and indicated that he had not been insensible of the cold weather of which the other complained.

Doctor Pequinillo's eyes, however, were fixed with a searching and inquisitive glance upon the gentleman and lady who had entered the room with him, and who seemed likely to be his only companions at the supper table. And here I must stop to describe them, though all descriptions and stoppings are quite wrong in a third volume.

The gentleman was a tall, good-looking man, apparently of about fifty years of age, though he might have been somewhat older, if, as I imagine, the anxieties and cares of life had rarely been added to the weight of years. His hair was rather gray, but not by any means thickly strewn with the silvery monitors. His figure was good and well-proportioned; though there was a slight tendency to that obesity, which peculiarly displays itself in Englishmen between fifty and sixty. His countenance was

frank, and the features good ; the complexion florid ; and the brows broad and clear. But, at the present time, an air of anxious thought gave it a degree of dignity, which was evidently not its common expression. The lady appeared considerably younger than her companion—perhaps seven or eight years. She was still a very handsome woman, and had preserved a good figure, in which the graces of girlhood might be seen under the shadows of a more advanced period of life, like the bright colours in a time-stained picture. Her face, too, bore an expression of care and much anxiety ; but something more was evident. There was a look of deep sorrow—of thoughtful, self-absorbed grief—in it ; and though the gentleman looked full in Doctor Pequinillo's face, as if to see who the destined companion of half-an-hour was, the lady kept her eyes bent on the ground without noticing anything, as she walked towards the table.

No ray of recognition lighted up the traveller's eyes, as they rested upon Doctor Pequinillo; but, being wrapped up in a shawl, he might be considered as under a mask; and when he removed that appendage, and, passing the waiter, took his seat at the opposite side of the table, at which the two who had entered with him had already placed themselves, the other male traveller's eyes were averted, and he was talking in a low tone to the lady by his side. Doctor Pequinillo did not allow him to go on long, however.

"This is a lucky meeting, Hal Ludlow," he said. "I have been searching for you at Waldon in vain."

The other started, gazed at him, and then frankly extended his hand across the table, saying—

"Ah, Kit! It is a lucky meeting, indeed. I did not answer your letter, because I thought I should catch you in Paris; for the news that came with it, by the same post, made my poor wife and I set off at

once. But can you tell us anything of Julian? We cannot find him,—we cannot discover the least trace of him.”

“I can tell you very little, I am sorry to say,” answered Doctor Pequinillo. “He is certainly in England, however.”

“Perhaps he is at Waldon then,” observed Mistress Ludlow, with an eager look. “He would surely come home—his old, dear home, of which he was so fond, poor fellow!”

Doctor Pequinillo fell into a reverie for a moment, and then, looking suddenly up, laid down the knife and fork with which he was preparing to sever the crust of a pigeon pie, and said—

“I’ll tell you what, Ludlow. We had better make a change of arrangements. Let us stop our journey—order a private room—and talk out all that is in our minds. Julian is not at Waldon, Mistress Ludlow; for I was there yesterday. So you will lose nothing by not going on, except the Fair; and I am not very sure that, when you hear

all I have to say, you may not be inclined to go with me to Dover. I can trace Julian so far on his way from Paris to London ; but no farther."

Here the waiter interfered to press the lady and the gentlemen to their supper, and the room was invaded by three outside passengers by the up-coach, who had flown upon the brandy-and-water at the bar, to console themselves for the rigours of the night journey.

"We had better take Kit's advice, my dear," said Mr. Ludlow to his wife. "We can but go on in a post-chaise to-morrow ; and we shall have no time to hear all before the mail starts. You can get a little sleep too."

"Sleep!" echoed Mistress Ludlow, shaking her head sadly. "But I am quite ready to stay ; and think it would be better."

"Then I will arrange everything," said Doctor Pequinillo.

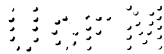
And, starting up from the table, he left the room.

It is a difficult thing, in the mid-watches

of the night, to get accommodation prepared for weary travellers, even in a coaching inn, as it is called. But Doctor Pequinillo was a skilful man, as we have shewn ; and, in about ten minutes, a fire was blazing tolerably in a small parlour on the ground floor ; his own valise and cloak were deposited in one corner, the goods and chattels of Mr. and Mistress Ludlow in another, and the shawl-handkerchief was restored to its lawful owner.

The room was a dingy little room enough ; but the lights upon the table, the crackling fire in the grate, a mirror, and an old-fashioned chandelier, refracting the light with a thousand varied and sparkling colours, gave it a cheerful aspect to the eyes of poor Mistress Ludlow, very different from the dull look of the public dining-room, where the mail supper had been spread.

“ Now tell us—do tell us, Kit Markus,” she said, as soon as the room was cleared,



and the door shut, "what do you know of poor Julian? for he must ever be as a son to me, and I love him with all a mother's love."

"We have all a great deal to tell, my dear Mistress Ludlow," said Doctor Pequillo; "but what *I* have to tell will, I am afraid, not be very satisfactory to you. Did you see the letter I wrote from Paris to your husband, just before the duel?"

"Yes—yes—I saw it," answered Mistress Ludlow, with the tears rising in her eyes. "It gave me the first real anguish I have felt since I became Hal Ludlow's wife. He showed it to me directly; and he did right. I cannot blame him for what he did before; for, perhaps, to deceive me about the death of my own poor boy, was the only way to save my life. But he did right—quite right—to tell me now; the news might have come harshly from others, and broke my heart. We

have heard all about the duel, too ; but we could learn nothing of Julian, and that is now our great anxiety."

"All I can tell you about him," observed Doctor Pequinillo, "is that he remained a day at Saint Denis, after quitting Paris, and then came on to England with an old French gentleman whom I know. At Dover, however, he left him. He was then in good health ; but that is nearly a fortnight ago, and nothing is known of him, either at Oxford, at his banker's in London, or at Waldon. I am now going down to Dover in the hope of tracing him out ; and I have no doubt—that is to say, I hope sincerely, dear lady—that I shall be able to discover what course he has followed, and bring him home."

There was a short pause, and a somewhat sad one ; for both Mr. Ludlow and his wife perceived that, although their companion endeavoured to speak cheerfully, there was no great hope at the bottom of his heart.

"I must not conceal from you," continued Doctor Pequinillo, "that Julian's mind was exceedingly depressed when last I saw him. It became necessary—absolutely necessary—to tell him what I knew of his birth ; and, I assure you, Mistress Ludlow, that it cannot have grieved you more to find that he is not your own son, than it grieved him to learn that you are not his mother."

Poor Emma Ludlow wept outright.

"His grief, however, was aggravated by other considerations," pursued Doctor Pequinillo ; "and the only way of giving him any relief, if I find him, or when I find him, will be to let him know the exact particulars of his birth."

"But who can tell him ?" asked Mr. Ludlow, suddenly.

"You can, I suppose," replied Doctor Pequinillo, in a tone of some surprise. "Mr. Westwood being dead, and unable to give or withhold his consent, you are, of course, free from all promises to secrecy."

"Assuredly I am," returned Hal Ludlow; "but I can tell him nothing more than he knows already—nothing more than you yourself know, and have told him."

"Then did not Julian Westwood tell you who was his namesake's mother?" asked Doctor Pequinillo, solemnly.

"Never," answered Mr. Ludlow—"he never uttered a word by which I could guess. He only besought me to take the child, to bring it up as my own, to let him see it often—"

"But, of course," interrupted Doctor Pequinillo, "you knew that he was Julian Westwood's natural child?"

"His child undoubtedly," replied Mr. Ludlow; "but not his illegitimate child; for that was the only point upon which he gave me full information. He assured me most solemnly, over and over again, that the boy was born in lawful marriage; and I concluded that he had made a match which he dared not avow to

his father; for the old Squire could sometimes be very stern."

Again there was a silent pause, and Doctor Pequinillo rose and walked up and down the room.

"It would be some comfort to him," said Mistress Ludlow, looking up, "to learn that he was born in lawful marriage, even if we cannot tell who his mother was."

"But little—but little," replied the Doctor, seating himself again; and then, dropping his voice, he added—"Judge of what his feelings must be, when I tell you, that, as far as I can discover, he is in love with, and plighted to his own sister."

"I feared it—I feared it, when I heard the tale," observed Mistress Ludlow. "Oh, Hal! this is very terrible. Surely Mr. Westwood ought to have told you more, so that you might warn poor Julian."

"He did not, however," answered Hal Ludlow, gravely. "On the contrary, whenever I came near the subject, he besought me not

to ask him any questions; and I never did, except one day when I heard he was going to be married to the present Mistress Westwood. Then, as I walked up the hill by the side of his horse, I said to him, in a sort of reproachful but joking way, 'You assured me, sir, that little Julian was born in wedlock.' He turned quickly round upon his horse, and gave me a look I shall never forget. It was so sad, and so solemn. It was a minute before he answered; but he kept looking at me all the time, as if he wanted to speak, though the words stuck in his throat. At last he said—'And so he was, Hal Ludlow. Of that I give you my word of honour as a gentleman, and pledge my faith as a Christian; but his mother is dead, my friend—and has been dead some time.'"

"Then he is rightfully the heir to the Westwood estates?" observed Doctor Pequillo, thoughtfully. But the next moment, as if some rapid train of reasoning had been going on in his own mind, which

had brought him to a sudden though definite conclusion, he started up, exclaiming—"No, it is impossible—it is all impossible—everything is impossible!—However, I will go and find him out if he is to be found on earth; and I will tell him that he is certainly a legitimate child. That may be some little comfort to him, perhaps, though to me it would be none at all. But now, Hal, let us get the past out of our minds, and think only of the present. It seems poor Julian left Dover on foot. This could not have been from present want of money; for he had drawn for a considerable sum in Paris, and had more in his banker's hands, they tell me. But could it be any fear of future want of money, that made him take such a way of travelling? When he found he was not your son, he might have thought that all his future resources were gone, and been seized with a fit of economy."

"Oh no," cried Mr. Ludlow. "Moderate in his expenses as he always is, he knows

that he has ample means. He gets a good deal from his college, and he has more than a hundred a-year from the little legacy that poor Miss Mary left him. Besides, the old Squire bequeathed him in his will five-thousand pounds; but of that I dare say he knows nothing."

"Did Julian Westwood leave him nothing?" asked Doctor Pequinillo.

"Nothing," replied Mr. Ludlow; "but then you know he was driving over to his lawyer's, at Ash Locombe, when the accident happened. He died without a will."

Doctor Pequinillo mused for several minutes, while Mistress Ludlow and her husband consulted together, as to whether it would be best to go back with their companion to Dover. Mistress Ludlow was eager to do so, but her husband hesitated; and their words came to Doctor Pequinillo's mind through his own thoughts, like a subdued bass in a piece of music.

At length he turned quickly round, saying—

“No, no, my dear Mistress Ludlow. You stay quietly here till morning, and then go on to Waldon. I will take a chaise directly, and get to Dover early. Thus, if he comes to Waldon, you will seize upon him ; if he lingers about Dover, I shall catch him. I have left letters for him at his bankers’ in London ; and I know that Mr. Denison, who was his second in the duel, is seeking for him too. Thus, between us all, we shall be sure to get intelligence of him in one place or another, whereas, if we all hunt upon one track, we may miss him.”

“I am sure any expenses you may incur—” said Mr. Ludlow.

“Pooh, pooh !” interrupted Doctor Pequillo, “you are getting purse-proud, Hal. But let me tell you I am as rich as you. I have eighteen thousand pounds in the three per cent consols, besides two or three other

little nest-eggs. Is not the world a great fool, Hal? It always was ruled by legerdemain, and always will be. You go and stay quietly at Waldon till I come to you. —Good bye—good bye! I shall be off for Dover in five minutes.”

Taking up his cloak and valise, Doctor Pequinillo shook hands with his friends, and quitted the room.

CHAPTER VII.

DOCTOR PEQUINILLO leaned back in the post-chaise, as the post-boy cracked his whip, and the horses set off with a petulant start. Was our learned friend about to console himself with a comfortable nap? It looked very like it; for as the chaise, was the most inconveniently conceived piece of mechanism ever constructed by our straight-backed ancestors, he deliberately folded up his cloak and put it on the seat behind him, to fill up a yawning chasm between his own back and the back of the vehicle. Nevertheless it was not so. Dr. Pequinillo never thought of sleep. He was one of those

men who, when the mind is excited, either by disappointment or expectation, by apprehension or hope, by anxiety or care, feel the temples burning with that over rapid action of the brain, which forbids all slumber—who sleep only after fruition. He laid himself back to think—to think at ease, so that the body might as little as possible interfere with the mind.

And think he did most heartily. But it was not of the whereabouts of Julian Ludlow. That was dismissed from his mind for the time. He was calculating something very nicely : it might be a piece of machinery ; for he was a great machinist, and in that capacity had made half his fortune : it might be a banker's account, or the chances of the stock market, or the value of lands and goods, or any other of those nice computations which require the tip of the index finger of the right hand to be applied successively to the tips of all the fingers of the left—the thumb not excluded.

He went over it a hundred times. The first time he ended his calculations, he said—

“It may be so.” And every time after the conclusion, his voice became stronger and stronger in tone, till, at the fiftieth time, he said, “It is very probably so ;” and at the hundredth, he asserted boldly, “It *must* be so.”

Then he looked out of the window, and up towards the sky, as if his calculations were astronomical ; and then, having finished his sum, he set himself to consider the “what then ?”

Now Doctor Pequinillo was very seldom wrong in his calculations ; and, as they led him in this case to very important conclusions, and those conclusions to very important actions, I shall beg leave, without in the least enquiring what Doctor Pequinillo thought, to lay before the reader, as succinctly as possible, what Doctor Pequinillo *did*.

At Canterbury, he told the ostler to get him a glass of ale—strong ale.

"It will quiet my wits," said Dr. Pequillo: "they are riding their horses too hard: they will injure their wind.—Sixteen miles to Dover. If I can but sleep that out, I shall be fresher to-morrow.—The matter is clear.—It must be so; and I may as well sleep.—Oh, this is the ale.—There's a shilling.—Go on, boy."

"The Ship, sir?"

"No, the Union," replied Doctor Pequillo.

And then he leaned back again, and closed his eyes. He only uttered five words more till the chaise and the daylight entered Dover together; and those words were "Grains of Paradise for ever!" which grains of Paradise, the unlearned reader may be pleased to know, are certain narcotic drugs libellously supposed to be used by brewers.

The streets of Dover are long and tiresome to pass, as every one knows, who

has ever been rattled over them, anxiously anticipating that, if the post-boy does not drive faster, he may lose the morning steam-boat. How people ever came to make a watering-place of the bottom of a punch-bowl, Heaven only knows ; but when a man needs pickling, he will go anywhere for a tub.

Through the tortuous streets of Dover, the post-boy drove very slowly on the present occasion, either out of reverence for the ancient vehicle which rattled behind him, or for the bones of the traveller it contained ; but the slowness of his progress had this advantage : it just gave time for the landlord of the Union Hotel to get out of his bed, to descend to the door of his inn, and to snuff the morning air in his dressing-gown and slippers. There he was, and such was his costume, when Doctor Pequinillo rattled up to the house, got out of the vehicle, paid the post-boy, and ascended the steps.

“ Going off by the boat, sir ? ” asked the

landlord, with some melancholy reflections upon the brevity of human enjoyments.

"No," replied Doctor Pequinillo. "I intend to stay here."

It gave the landlord a happier view of human life; and he bustled about with great alacrity, to make his new guest comfortable as soon as possible. Doctor Pequinillo in the meantime looked through a great receptacle for travelling trunks and boxes which adjoined the hall. It was thinly tenanted, so that he could see every article it contained without trouble, from the lady's maid's enormous trunk, which makes the French postillions swear, to the light portmanteau of the experienced traveller. But the objects he sought were not to be discovered.

I have a faint notion that the name of the landlord of the Union Hotel, at that time, was Atkinson. Doctor Pequinillo sent for him, as he was sitting down to breakfast. But Mr. Atkinson was shaving, and he shaved away. Nay, more, he put

on coat, waistcoat, and a white handkerchief, and then came down as smug and neat as he usually appeared after the hour of eight ; when the following conversation ensued between him and Doctor Pequinillo. Let me remark, however, in the first place, that the Doctor proceeded cautiously, by which he retarded, to no inconsiderable extent, the communication of the intelligence he wanted.

“ Pray, Mr. Atkinson,” said the Doctor, “ was there not a gentleman here, some little time ago, who left two portmanteaus in your charge,” (his information was obtained from M. de Benis)—“ two black portmanteaus ?”

“ Lord bless you, Sir !” replied the landlord, who was a cautious man likewise, and always thought the least said was soonest mended ; “ there are so many people leave portmanteaus here.”

“ But this was a tall, very handsome young man, with curly black hair and whiskers,” said Doctor Pequinillo ; “ and

the name Julian Ludlow was upon a brass plate upon each of the portmanteaus."

"I do recollect something about it," said the landlord, who rarely committed himself. "John—John!" and he called from the door till a porter came in. "About those portmanteaus that lay there so long—I mean those the gentleman left—the tall man—Mr. Ludlow."

"Why, Sir, they were sent for, you know," said the porter.

"Ah, I forgot," returned the landlord. "They were sent for the day before yesterday."

By this time, Doctor Pequinillo had remarked the landlord's disposition to renitency; and he tried another tack.

"Pray where were they sent to?" he asked. "The fact is, Mr. Atkinson, the gentleman has not gone home to his friends, as was expected; and we are all very anxious about him. Having learned from a gentleman who travelled with him, that he left his portmanteaus here intend-

ing to walk to London, I have come down to trace him out ; and you would very much oblige me if you could give me any information."

This explanation had a wonderful effect upon the landlord's memory.

"Oh, dear yes, Sir," he cried. "Now I remember all about it. The portmanteaus were sent to the White Lion at Sittingbourne; and I think the people said that the gentleman had got as far as that, and had been taken very ill there : he was better, though, they said, and able to send for his things—which he must have wanted dreadfully ; for he had nothing at all with him."

Doctor Pequinillo mused for a moment, and then said,

"Have you got a map?"

"A map? Yes, Sir," replied the landlord. "What map?"

"Oh, any map will do," returned the Doctor, taking his chance for the map being the inevitable map of England.

It turned out, however, that the map the landlord brought was a map of Kent; but the Doctor was a wise man, and never acknowledged that he had made a mistake.

Now, here let me stop to correct a great error, which the world generally, and moralists in particular, fall into (almost) universally. They tell you that you should acknowledge your mistakes, admit your faults, confess your errors. But what is the consequence if you do? Every one remembers them to your disadvantage; especially your near friends, more especially your near relations, most especially your beloved wife. They are treasured up as precedents; and "Didn't you do so and so, on such and such an occasion? and isn't it very probable that you are making the same blunder? and that you are just as great a fool in this instance as you were in that?" is ringing in the bottom of their hearts, like a shout in a brass kettle, whenever they differ with you, even if this very

rude and unpleasant opinion does not find utterance at the mouth. Men who know anything of the world, and its inconceivable want of candour, know right well that it never does any good to confess a mistake—which is merely, after all, putting a black mark against your name—and that the only ear for such confessions, is the ear of Omniscience, to which the acknowledgment, being gratuitous candour, may pass for something in the Court of Mercy, if it be joined with the profound humility in which unworthiness should clothe itself in the presence of Perfection.

Doctor Pequinillo, as I have said, never acknowledged to any fellow man that he had committed a mistake ; though to himself for rectification, and to God for pardon, he often most humbly confessed the fact. On the present occasion, he looked at the map with a learned and inquisitive eye, carried his glance from Canterbury to Maidstone, to Riverhead, to

Westerham, which was upon the very verge of the sheet, and said aloud,

"Seven and five are twelve, and nine are twenty-one" — (Heaven only knows what he was calculating ; but I can't help thinking he was only sporting with the imagination of a landlord) — "and fourteen are thirty-five. Have the goodness to order me a chaise in half-an-hour for Canterbury."

The landlord thought him the oddest man alive ; and the waiter confirmed that opinion, by averring, in the most solemn manner, that he had seen him swallow the steel fork which had gone up with the toasted ham ; and yet he admitted that he could discover no deficiency in the number of forks upon the table.

"It went down his throat, however, as sure as winkin'," said the waiter, informing the bar-maid.

Now whether "*winkin'*" is ever sure or not, I must leave the learned to determine, as I am in a hurry to follow Doctor

Pequinillo to Canterbury, and thence to Sittingbourne.

At the latter place, the excellent Doctor stepped out of his chaise, with a sedate and sober step. It was not his cue to be the least in a hurry. The man in black silk stockings, who had suffered Julian Ludlow to fall down fainting in the hall, presented himself; but he had now, above the stockings, a white apron and a striped cotton jacket, which perhaps made him more civil; the external of a saucy man has a great influence upon his demeanour.

"Pray, is a gentleman of the name of Julian Ludlow staying in this house?" asked Doctor Pequinillo, gravely. "I understand he has been ill for some days, and have come down to see him."

"Oh, sir, he is much better," replied the waiter. "He's quite nicely on the sofa in the sitting-room. Pray walk up."

"Certainly," said Doctor Pequinillo.

Following the waiter, he entered a small sitting-room on the first floor, where lay

the mere shadow of the Julian Ludlow he had known. Seated beside him was worthy Doctor Anderson, whose interest in his patient had grown as the case proceeded, and had, of course, increased very much when, having rescued him from the jaws of death, professional vanity was tickled, at the same time that native kindliness of heart was gratified.

On the sudden opening of the door, and the appearance of his good friend, Doctor Pequinillo, Julian gave a sharp, quick start, and the surgeon exclaimed, in his usual vocabulary—

“D—n your blood, sir! why do you come into a sick-room in that way, unannounced?”

“I hope my blood will remain und—d,” replied Doctor Pequinillo, who was rarely surprised by any thing. “This gentleman will be glad to see me, I am sure. We have all been in great anxiety about you, Julian; and, as I am burdened with one or two pieces of good news, and obtained, yes—

terday morning, some clue to your abode, I hastened down to find you out."

"I have been unable to write," said Julian, in a faint voice—"indeed unable to speak until within the last three days; but, thanks to the skill and kindness of this excellent man, I am rapidly getting better."

"Pooh, pooh!" cried the surgeon, who mixed a certain portion of blasphemy, and a certain portion of piety, in a manner not at all uncommon with gentlemen of the old school. "Pooh, pooh! Thanks to a devilish good constitution, temperate habits, and the will of God. All I have poured down your throat would have done you no good without those three things; and you are a d—d lucky fellow to possess them, let me tell you."

"And to have met with such a surgeon," added Julian. "But what are your tidings, my good friend?" he continued, addressing Doctor Pequinillo. "My expectations are not very high; so that almost anything will seem favourable."

"I will tell you by-and-by," replied

Doctor Pequinillo ; "though my visit must be very short."

"Ho, ho!" exclaimed the surgeon. "That's a broad hint! I'll be off. I've plenty to do, thank Heaven and the influenza. Why I have staid gossiping here so long, I don't know. But mind, sir, have the goodness not to excite this gentleman in any way, either by too much talk, or too interesting subjects. He's getting well now ; but if you choose to kill him, you may, and be d—d to you."

Doctor Pequinillo smiled, and merely nodded his head, sitting down by Julian's side, as the surgeon left the room.

"You seem to have got an original here," said Doctor Pequinillo.

He then proceeded in the quietest possible manner, but with an intentional long-windedness, not at all in his character, to dole out—spoonful by spoonful, as it were, and that well diluted too—all that he had to tell. This was, it is true, a very weak sort of chicken broth ; but it did Julian

good. To hear that Sir Willian Colefox was in a fair way of recovery, was a great relief to him ; and to learn that there could hardly be a doubt of his own legitimacy, affected him more joyfully than Doctor Pequinillo had expected. The good Doctor made the most of it, it is true ; for there was one subject on which he could not venture to offer him hope or consolation. He told him of his meeting with Mr. and Mistress Ludlow, of their anxiety about him, and their parental affection towards him ; but when Julian eagerly asked what information regarding his birth Mr. Ludlow possessed, Doctor Pequinillo was obliged to acknowledge that he had none.

“ To my good friend, Hal,” he said, “ Mr. Westwood was as much reserved as to others, it would seem ; but I have obtained some hints which will guide me, I hope, to a clue ; and that may lead us to certainty at length. And now, my dear Julian, the best thing you can do, is to remain quietly here, while I go to find out

the right end of this clue. Neither fear too much nor hope too much ; for the one would depress you at present, and the other is but a drunkard's score—a heavy debt to be paid in the future, for a momentary relief.”

“But what did Mr. Ludlow think ?” asked Julian. “What was his own opinion ?”

“I fear it was the same as ours,” replied Doctor Pequinillo ; “but it is clear he possessed no definite information ; and he may be mistaken. Time only can show that.”

He rose as he spoke, taking up his cloak from the back of the chair, as if preparing to depart.

“Surely you are not going so soon ?” said Julian.

“Directly, my dear boy,” responded Doctor Pequinillo. “I am off for West-
ham in half-an-hour. Some ham sandwiches, a glass of wine, and a shave, will

occupy that time. I leave as little to be shaved as possible, in the purest spirit of economy ; but what remains to be shaved must be shaved, lest the profane vulgar should discover the difference in colour between my beard and my moustachios. I will therefore leave you, my young friend, I trust, with somewhat happier feelings than when I came. Perhaps I may bring you better tidings still, on my return ; but an equal mind will not suffer itself to be befooled by expectation."

He took a step or two towards the door, after shaking Julian by the hand ; but then suddenly paused, saying—

"I take it for granted you have money enough, as you drew before you left Paris."

"I was robbed of all I had in my portmanteau, at Saint Denis," returned Julian ; "but I sent another draft to London last night, and my only fear is, that the bankers may not recognize my wavering hand."

"That's easily guarded against," observed

the Doctor, taking out his pocket book, and laying some notes upon the table. "You can pay me when you get your money.—Good bye !—good bye !—Keep yourself quiet."

And he quitted the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

Now for a rapid drive through a rapid chapter. Maidstone, Riverhead, Westerham, Godstone, Ryegate, one of the most beautiful parts of England ; Dorking, Guildford. Nothing could be more lovely—more exhilarating. The cold night and foggy morning of early Spring was succeeded by a bright glowing sun, and an atmosphere as warm as Summer ; and though no leaf was upon the trees, no bud even put forth, except the tender green promise of the honeysuckles, and the unwiped noses of the horse-chestnuts, there was a world of richness in the brown woods; and a perceptible change

of colour could be seen, from the gray of Winter, to the reddening tint of Spring. The infinite streams which lie upon that road, too, were all sparkling in the sunshine; and the thrushes on the top branches sang sweet hope over Doctor Pequinillo's head.

He himself was far from insensible to the beauties of Nature; for Nature had kneaded him of no inferior clay, although she had put it into a somewhat curious shape; and, even while ruminating upon plans, purposes, and events, totally distinct from the scenes through which he was passing, the spirit of the landscape seemed to penetrate his soul, and fill it with energies and expectations.

"A difficult task—a difficult task!" ejaculated Doctor Pequinillo, to himself; "but it must be so, and, God willing, I will prove it so. Hope seemed dead, like those trees under the frost of Winter; but the trees will bloom again, and why not hope likewise?"

On he went, paying the post-boys to

drive faster than they would have ventured under their master's eye, rattling through shady lanes, winding on through green valleys, here climbing a gentle hill, there galloping down a slope, till the yellow chaise creaked, and groaned, and rattled, as if all its old bones would have been shaken to pieces.

"Chaise on—chaise on!" was still the cry. Nevertheless, it was dark night before Doctor Pequinillo got into Guildford. Did night stop him? Oh, no! Did the savoury viands at the White Hart seduce him? Far from it. "Chaise on!" And away went Doctor Pequinillo to Ash Locombe.

At the curious little old inn, where he had sojourned as a showman, and called the Commercial Arms (though what the Commercial Arms are, Heaven only knows; for even the Herald's College, which, like Noah's Ark, has given refuge to all the beasts upon earth, ignores them)—at the Commercial Arms in the Market Place,

Doctor Pequinillo took up his abode for the time, stopped his rapid journey, and ate his supper. Nay more, he sent for the landlord and a bottle of wine.

Fifteen years had passed since he had set eyes upon the landlord's face; and those fifteen years might be marked in the person of Mr. Simpkinson, as the age of trees is ascertained by some botanists, by the layers which he had annually made; only his were of flesh, not of wood. Out, and out, and out he had grown, under the influence of ale, prosperity, and a jovial disposition, till Mr. Simpkinson, who was a tall man, had assumed the outward appearance of one of his own vats with a coat and waistcoat on. Mr. Simpkinson was exceedingly glad to see the gentleman, whose face was as a sort of ghostly dream to him, but whose name, calling, and degree, were totally obliterated from memory. Neither was Mr. Simpkinson unwilling to drink his glass of wine with him; nor to communicate anything

and everything to his guest, that his guest could desire ; for he was the exact reverse of the other " Kinson—" the Mr. Atkinson of the Union Hotel at Dover ; and was ready to pour forth all he knew upon any one. Those great barrel-shaped men always are : they are sure to have a spigot and faucet somewhere.

Doctor Pequinillo soon found the point, and set the stream running. After it had once begun to flow, it was easy to turn it in any direction ; and the simple words—" A terrible accident you had here, about six weeks ago, Mr. Simpkinson," led the worthy landlord into a full detail of the circumstances which hurried Julian Westwood to his grave.

" Ah, sir," he ended, " it was a terrible affair ; and a bad thing for this part of old England. Two such gentlemen as he and his father, we are not likely to see again in a hurry ; and when a large property like that goes to a girl, there's no knowing who may come in."

"Then he had no son?" said Doctor Pequinillo.

The landlord shook his head. "No, sir, no—no son at all. When they laid him in the vault, they buried the last man of the Westwood family, which has been here, or about here, for six-hundred year or more."

"He was buried at Waldon, I suppose?" said Doctor Pequinillo, in an enquiring tone.

"Oh, dear no, sir,—oh, dear no," replied the landlord. "The family vault is over on the Godstone road, about fifteen miles off, at Yaxley. There's nothing but a farm there, and what they call the Grange. That's the old family house, Westwood Grange; and the saying is, they were all born there, and buried there. The church stands hard by the Grange,—shoulders it like—and they do say both were built by the old Saxons."

"That must be interesting," said Doctor Pequinillo. "I am rather curious about

Saxon architecture ; and I should like to take a gig to-morrow, and drive over to see the place."

"That's easily done," said the landlord ; "and the sexton will show it to you, or the old parson either—if you will give him half-a-crown. Just you pretend to mistake him for the sexton, and slip a half-crown into his hand, and he'll tell you worlds of stories about the place ; for he's not stingy of his talk."

"You don't mean to say the clergyman would take half-a-crown ?" exclaimed Doctor Pequinillo.

"Wouldn't he though !" returned the landlord. "Why, he's the meanest creature that ever crawled. He quarrelled with all his parish about tithes, when first he came in, (that's six or seven-and-twenty years ago) ; and he quarrelled with the old Squire, too, though he was a hard man to quarrel with ; but, for many a long year, the Squire would not speak to him, and said he was a disgrace to his cloth. He's got a pretty

good round sum of money, howsumdever ; and what he's got, he'll keep. The sexton is just the same age as himself, but a very different sort of man, for he gets roaring drunk every Saturday night, and they wheel him home in a barrow—ha, ha ! ha, ha !”

“ A pleasantly organised parish,” said Doctor Pequinillo. “ However, I'll go over and see the old place to-morrow. But first I have a little business to do with Mr. Grimes, the lawyer.”

“ Oh, then, you know Mr. Grimes ?” observed the landlord.

“ No,” replied Doctor Pequinillo. “ I don't know him ; but he was Mr. Westwood's lawyer, I think, was he not ?”

“ To be sure he was,” answered the landlord, “ for the last sixteen or seventeen year. He succeeded old Hargrave, who was their lawyer before.—You knew Mr. Westwood then ?” (The Doctor nodded his head.) “ And the old gentleman ?” asked Mr. Simpkinson. (The Doctor nodded

his head again.) "Well then, Sir, you knew two men that were worth knowing," said the landlord. "The old man was like a butt of mild old ale, and the young man was like a bottle of rich Burton."

"Ah, the death of the younger Mr. Westwood was a sad thing!" exclaimed Doctor Pequinillo. "Did they take him back at once to the Hall?"

"To be sure," replied the landlord. "That's to say, he lay for an hour or so at the Two Sawyers, till they could get something fit to carry him in. After that, they took him straight up to the Hall, and he died there."

Doctor Pequinillo mused over this information; and then, having finished his bottle with the aid of the landlord, retired to bed.

He was up early in the morning, however, ordered a horse and gig to be ready in an hour, and set out for the office of Mr. Grimes. He found him a perfect man of business, and exceedingly disagreeable to deal with. His answers were

short ; and he continued writing and scribbling notes all the time he gave them. Doctor Pequinillo could make very little of him, although his object seemed simply to be to learn all the particulars of Julian Westwood's death.

"I have heard he was coming here to make his will," said the man of law, in answer to one of the Doctor's questions ; "but I have no personal knowledge upon the subject. He did *not* make his will, that's all I know. The rest is mere public rumour."

"Did he leave no notes or memoranda for a will ?" asked Doctor Pequinillo.

"None that I know of," answered the lawyer. "But I really did not take the trouble to enquire. He certainly did make no will, as I have said ; and memoranda have no effect in law."

Doctor Pequinillo was not easily rebuffed.

"May I ask you," he said, in the most placable tone possible, although the lawyer

spoke somewhat testily, "if Mr. Westwood—that is, the last Mr. Westwood—ever made any communication to you regarding his intentions respecting a young gentleman of the name of Julian Ludlow?"

The lawyer rose from the table, and bowed low, saying, with mock gravity,

"Farther this deponent sayeth not."

"Of course we may tender a bill of exceptions," said the Doctor, who had all the time been casting his eyes round the study, and who had now a pencil and a memorandum book in his hand, making some notes.

"Oh, ho!" exclaimed Mr. Grimes. "Sir, if you are professional, allow me to say that it is quite an unprofessional proceeding to—"

"And whereas the said deponent hath in his custody three large tin cases of papers formerly appertaining to the said Julian Westwood, Esquire, deceased, and various other documents, leases, covenants,

surrenders, court rolls, certificates of marriage, baptism, &c.," said Doctor Pequinillo, rising also, and bowing equally low. "I think, Mr. Grimes, we need say no farther upon the matter. I came here simply for the purpose of ascertaining from you what were Mr. Westwood's intentions regarding Mr. Julian Ludlow, quite as well aware as you are, that intentions are not acts; but, if you choose to give no information, we must find it; that is all. The case is a very pretty case, and we will see what can be done."

Doctor Pequinillo was frustrated; for, by the blessing of Heaven, he had had very little to do with law, and had no idea of how completely a lawyer is armed at all points against fishing enquiries. He is a sort of armadillo, indeed—to get at whom one must roast him in his shell; and, as Doctor Pequinillo had no fire ready, he walked away back to his inn.

Now, Mr. Simpkinson had not the slightest hesitation in the world in trusting Doctor

Pequinillo with a very good horse, and a very good gig—not that he was in the least degree impressed with the honesty of the Doctor's nature by the honesty of his countenance ; but he was a wide-seeing calculator, whose balance sheet extended over many years. He had only lost three horses and three gigs in his whole life, and he had made sixteen hundred and seventy-three travellers pay fifteen per cent each upon the damage he had sustained. Doctor Pequinillo was, therefore, soon accommodated with the vehicle he wanted, and set out upon the road for Yaxley ; but only proceeded two miles before he halted.

An elm tree was near the road, a sign-post, and a mile stone ; and on the sign was represented a man pulling up a saw, and another pulling it down. Straight to the door drove Doctor Pequinillo. Though it was a only quarter past ten o'clock, he seemed to have a strong inclination for a glass of ale. He used no circumlocution

about his errand, however ; and the spending of sixpence for the good of a house, was a mere formality to smooth the way, without any intention of concealing the object.

" Pray, my good friend," he said to the landlord, " when poor Mr. Westwood, the young Squire, met with that terrible accident, some six weeks or two months ago, did he drop any little scraps of paper out of his pocket or out of the curricule ?"

" Not a mite," replied the landlord, at once. " Why, his very watch wasn't chucked out of his pocket ; and how his head happened to be so battered, I can't tell ; for he fell quite easy like. Fred, the groom, came against the mile-stone ; but the Squire seemed to me to hit nothing but the turf ; and I was standing at the door at the very minute."

" Strange that he should not have dropped any papers !" said Doctor Pequillo ; " for we know he was going to his lawyer's about some business, and most

likely had documents about him; but one of them can't be found."

"Well, he didn't leave any on 'em here," said the landlord, "or I'd have sent 'em home long ago. They could be no good to me, you know, whatever they were."

"I suppose not," said Doctor Pequinillo. And, once more frustrated, he got into his gig, and drove away.

The Doctor had to ask his way three times to the small village—if it deserved that name—of Yaxley. It was too small to be within the reach of finger-posts—too insignificant to require public indication; but, after having passed about seven miles upon the high-road, the Doctor turned down one of those by-lanes which lead among scenes to be found nowhere but in England—quiet, peaceful, comfortable scenes—scenes of home life, and happy mediocrity. Ay, *peaceful*; for that is the only term applicable to them; and, although the simple cottage, rude, and ill-fashioned, with its tattered thatch, half usurped by house-leek,

and fringed, perhaps, by the dwarf iris, affords no great indication of prosperity, yet an air of peacefulness is about it, which speaks of laws just in themselves, and equally administered; such as put life, and property, and rational liberty, if not absolutely beyond the power of the ruffian or the tyrant, yet within a safeguard very difficult to break.

Pursuing these lanes for more than seven miles, and stopping here and there to make sure of his way, Doctor Pequinillo at length came to a somewhat wilder and less cultivated view. On his right, was a rich, level country, divided into little fields by thick hedge-rows, with many a cottage, and many a farm, and many a barn, and many a loaded rick-yard: on his left, a small wood, of low and rather scrubby oaks—perhaps three hundred yards across; and beyond them a bare hill side, running along about twenty miles out of reach of the eye—good pasture for sheep, and a favorite of the setting sun; for his

last look was given to it. Before him, the road was visible in a straight line for not more than a quarter of a mile, rising very gently, to descend into a wide valley, and displaying, at its highest point, another pleasant view, with two or three objects about half-a-mile distant, which immediately caught the attention of Doctor Pequinillo, and made him say—

“Here I am.”

Those objects were, an old, gray, square-steepled church, with a little octagonal tower, not much larger than a Turkish minaret, attached to one angle. A small grave-yard, a low wall, and a sloping space of green turf, divided it from a house built of the same stone, and apparently of the same epoch. Neither of them had anything Saxon about them, and neither of them were in a ruinous condition.

On a high bank, on the opposite side of the road, was a low, small dwelling, substantially built, but evi-

dently suffered to go to decay, which Doctor Pequinillo pronounced to be the Parsonage; and, nearly opposite the principal entrance of the church-yard, was a little one-storied cottage, on the walls of which were China roses already in bloom, and the thick, bare stems of a vine, extending to the very thatch.

Doctor Pequinillo drove on, and pulled up at the door of the cottage, enquiring of an old woman, who was washing a night-cap under the eaves, if the sexton was at home.

"He's up there in the church-yard. You can't see him for the steeple," said the old woman. "He's a' diggin' of Nancy Martin's grave. She died last night at half-past one o'clock; and a long time she's been about it."

"It's sometimes a difficult piece of work," said Doctor Pequinillo, gravely.

And, tying his horse to a post, he walked into the church-yard, and was soon in conversation with the sexton.

The sexton, who was an old man, exceedingly thin, and with a cough which sextons often have—a true church-yard cough—looked up to the house at the top of the bank, and then got out of the grave, in which he was immersed up to the armpits. Unlike most sextons, he was not loquacious ; yet a merry twinkle was in his eye, which showed that, over the flowing pot or cheering cup, that man of Death's experiences could have his jest at the mortal follies which he was so often called upon to consign to the silent oblivion of the tomb. He winked at Doctor Pequinillo ; and, adding to the wink a sign to follow him, he advanced to a little outbuilding of the church, of modern date, unlocked a small door, and admitted him into a neat little vestry.

Between two wooden shelves, on the right hand, stood, upright, four or five folio volumes, backed with rough calfskin. Nodding at them with his head, the sexton observed—

"There they are. But I had better shut the door, for fear his Reverence should catch us."

"Are those all?" asked Doctor Pequinillo, taking out one of the volumes, while the old man closed the door.

"Lord bless you!" replied the sexton: "It's but a small parish; and all that we marry, or bury, or christen here in a thousand years, might go into a lady's pocket-book. But who are you looking for? I know 'em all nearly by heart, from Harry of Wendover, to little Sue Jenkins, who died of the croup last year. Death and I haven't had a turn since then till last night.—But that's the marriage registry you've got."

"It will do," said Doctor Pequinillo, turning the leaves; and, letting his eye rest on some marvellous scrawl, far superior to any of the specimens of bad writing in "Carte's Court hand," he hurried forward to the commencement of the century, and looked eagerly onward for the name of Westwood any-

where in the pages. Suddenly he found two of the leaves adhering together, so that a reader was apt to turn over both together. They were not pasted ; but it seemed as if the long edge of each, opposite to the back, had been fastened lightly to the other with gum. Doctor Pequinillo took his finger, and inserting it between the two leaves at the bottom of the page, gradually pressed it forwards and upwards, easily separating the one from the other. One page was blank ; but the opposite side had a record upon it, which Doctor Pequinillo was eagerly inspecting, when a stout, old man entered the vestry in haste, puffing and blowing, with some irritation, and much eagerness, in his face.

“What’s this? what’s this?” cried the parson, addressing the sexton. “How dare you show the registers to any one without my presence? Don’t you know there’s a fee?”

“Bless your Reverence!” said the sexton, “the gentleman only wanted to look at

the church, and see the marbles and the brasses in it ; and he took a look at the register as he passed."

"Merely literary curiosity," observed Doctor Pequinillo, with a half smile—"to see how our ancestors, Révérend Sir, contrived to write their names."

"Well, there's a fee," said the parson, rudely. "If you choose to indulge in such whims, you must pay for them."

"I am not sure you are right," returned Doctor Pequinillo ; "but there's eighteen pence. A sight of you is worth the money. I paid a shilling to see the Bonassus."

"Do you mean to insult me, Sir, in my own church ?" asked the parson.

"Not in the least," replied the Doctor ; "only I am fond of zoological curiosities ; and, as a living specimen is worth a thousand stuffed ones, I'll give up the marbles and the brasses, and wend my way home, praying Heaven to send us a pure race of parsons for the time to come."

Heaven granted his prayer ; for between

that time and this, a marvellous change, as every man of forty knows, has taken place in the clergy of England. But I fear, Doctor Pequinillo's words were spoken somewhat irreverently ; for as he drove back to Ash Locombe, joy and satisfaction seemed running over his moustachios in an irrepressible stream.

Towards the end of his journey, he fell into a more sober, a graver, a more perturbed mood, as if some considerations of a less satisfactory nature had suggested themselves to his mind ; but with those we have nothing to do at present.

CHAPTER IX.

ALTHOUGH, as I have said, Doctor Pequinillo fell into fits of thought and consideration towards the end of his journey back to Ash Locombe, let his horse go slowly, and, instead of flanking him up the hills, let the whip drop gently on his back, as if merely to furnish him with a reminder not to stand quite still, yet the Doctor was decidedly more cheerful, more composed, and evidently more contented, that evening, than he had been for many days before.

Now, it may be asked, by that great class of readers who live within a wall of selfishness, and whose feelings, like those of a

class of fishes which bear very nearly the same epithet which may be applied to themselves, *id est*, shell-fish, can only be aroused by boiling-water—it may be asked by these persons, I say, what could be the latent cause of all this fuss, bustle, anxiety, care, grief, thought, consideration—call it by what name you like—in the mind of Doctor Pequinillo? What had he to do with the Westwood family, or the Ludlow family, or Julian Ludlow, or Julian Westwood? What signified to him whether the one Julian was the other Julian's legitimate son or not?—whether he had twopence a-year or ten-thousand. How were Doctor Pequinillo's interests affected thereby?

There is a class of men, dear reader—rare, and becoming rarer—who have the power (and power, with the inclination to use it, generally go together) of throwing themselves, as it were, into the situation of others, becoming imbued with their sensations, feeling their feelings, thinking their

thoughts, and identifying themselves, for a time at least, with their pleasures or their sorrows, their miseries or their happiness. Sad, that such a generation should be passing away ; but there are still some of them left ; and I can bring home their character even to the most selfish reader, I think—supposing that he is married, and has children whom he loves. Has he never watched their innocent gambols, enjoyed their gay sports, cast off the restraint of age, and mingled in their games, shared in all their little excitement, cried out—“ Well done, Charley ! that is not fair, Mary—catch him, catch him, Florence ? ” If he has, he has felt in some degree what men of expansive hearts feel many a time towards others of the same family of human children. And there are such men. Out upon the base, sordid, lying caricatures of human nature, in which men, painting from their own foul hearts, represent mankind as all degraded, selfish, and mechanical ! It is a crime, as well as a libel, to draw such

pictures ; for, by so doing, we justify to the base their own baseness, by teaching them to believe that all are as base as themselves.

There are men who can forget themselves in others ; and Doctor Pequinillo was one of them. In Julian Ludlow he had taken an early and a kindly interest; and that interest had increased since their meeting in Italy, till, without any personal object to be gained, without any selfish feeling to be served, Doctor Pequinillo was more eager, more active, in seeking the relief and benefit of his young friend, than he would have been in the pursuit of anything confined to self.

These were his motives, dear reader—this was his object ; and Doctor Pequinillo was joyful, because he thought he had made one step towards that certainty which he knew was best for his young friend's mind. If the reader wishes to know why deep thought, and somewhat anxious consideration, mingled with the satisfaction which Doctor Pequinillo dis-

played and felt, I can only answer that it was because, though the first step is a great point gained, it is not the whole—nor, according to a vulgar error, even half the battle.

On the following morning, early, the Doctor set out from the Commercial Arms, in Ash Locombe, on foot, retaining his room at the inn, and leaving his valise there. He took the direction of Waldon, which, as the reader knows, is only a few miles distant; but he went not near the village itself, and took especial care not to visit the house of Hal Ludlow. Leaving Waldon on the right, he bent his steps directly towards the park of the Westwood family, crossed over a stone stile which passed from the outside to the inside of the park, and then, in a sauntering easy kind of way, proceeded through the hawthorns and old chesnut trees which were scattered over the lower part of the slope, till he reached the park-keeper's cottage, and there knocked at the door and entered.

I have said he set out early. Now, that is a very indefinite term, and may be translated any way according to the tastes and habits of the reader. To speak more punctually, however, the morning light had still an eye of gray in it when he left Ash Locombe; and the roses of the morning had not faded half an hour when he stood before the park-keeper's door.

Joan was up, and her husband's breakfast was on the table, and Robin, who had gone out to look after a herd of deer, near a spot where the fence had given way, was not yet returned. But Doctor Pequillo, who had been minute in his previous enquiries, sat down and talked to the good woman about her husband, and her son, who was a Corporal in the Guards, and her daughter, who had died of consumption, two years before. He was quite kind and familiar, and seemed to know all about the family; and Joan had told him—without knowing that she was telling him anything,—all that he did'nt know concerning herself

and hers, before he had been in the cottage a quarter of an hour.

At the end of that time, Robin came in; and Doctor Pequinillo saluted him quite as an old friend, though the poor man, to the best of his recollection and belief, had never seen him in his life before. He was very glad to see the gentleman, however. Doctor Pequinillo sat and chatted with him while he took his breakfast; and, strange to say, for one who certainly came seeking information, he asked no questions whatever. He merely put Robin and Joan on the track, and let them run. They had been park-keeper and park-keeperess to the Westwood family thirty years and six months on that blessed day; and they had known the old Squire in his prime, and the young Squire in his youth, and dear, beautiful Miss Mary as a young girl; and they told the Doctor many an anecdote of the household in other times, and mourned over the departure from the scene of life,

of a pleasant group which had greatly embellished it.

"Ah, sir," said Robin; "that was a family such as one seldom meets with."

"But Mister Julian was somewhat gay, was he not?" said the Doctor.

"He was as good a young gentleman as ever lived," replied Robin, "and would not have hurt any one for the whole world. He would dance with the girls at the harvest home, and have a romp with them too, for that matter. I won't say that, if he caught one of them running round the hay-stack, and she was pretty, he might not give her a hearty kiss; but there never was a household, sir, that had to shed a tear on Mister Julian's account till he died; and then there was hardly a dry eye in the place. Even without his own good heart, sir, Miss Mary would have kept him straight. It's a grand thing to have a sister like that. One has always some one to go to when one wants advice,

or comfort either; and Mister Julian almost worshipped her, and she was certainly too much of an angel to remain down here very long.—I always thought our poor girl was very like her.—Did you ever see Bessy, sir?"

"Yes," returned Doctor Pequinillo, truly enough; for he had told her fortune with the cards, at the fair, though, to say sooth, he was not very sure of it; "but she was quite a young thing then.—I suppose you are amongst the oldest servants on the place?"

"Much about it," answered the man. "Mr. Brand was here before us; for he was the old steward's son, and used to do part of the business for his father."

"And Mr. Willett has been a long time with them, too?" said Doctor Pequinillo.

"Not so long as we have sir," answered Robin. "He came ten years after I did; and a good place he has had of it."

"Has made a good deal of money, I dare say?" rejoined the Doctor.

"That he has," answered Robin. "But

he's a very respectable man, sir, and would have done better, but his sister's family have drained him a good deal. He behaved very well, however, at poor Mister Julian's death. It was so sudden, the accident, that there was no will made. He'd have had a good legacy else, I dare say. He took it quite well, sir, however, that he got nothing, and said to me, 'Robin,' says he, 'every one has lost far more by my poor master's death, than I have lost for want of a legacy ; so I should be a brute to think about it at a time of such a great misfortune.' I thought that was handsome, sir, 'specially as I knew he wanted money to fit out his nephew. But our lady gave him a hundred pounds, and all his master's clothes, which were worth double as much; though he didn't get that for them by three quarters."

"Ah, indeed!" said Doctor Pequinillo, with every intention that the man should go on, and tell his story out ; but Robin rambled back to his Bessy again and the Doctor soon after took his leave, and

walked away straight to the house of the steward.

"The steward was hardly dressed ; but the Doctor was shewn into a little office, where he was joined in a few minutes by a thin, stiff, somewhat elderly man, from the first glance of whose person he instantly took his cue. He understood at once that it would be necessary to be categorical ; and he said, in a brief, sharp, resolute sort of way—

"Mr. Brand, I have come to ask you some questions. Will you be so good as to carry your memory back for something like twenty years ; and tell me if you were ever acquainted with a family of the name of Escot ?"

"I was, sir," replied Mr. Brand—"with some members of the family, at least."

"Of what persons did it consist at that time ?" asked the Doctor.

There was authority in his tone ; and Mr. Brand, having a reverence for authority, replied—

"There were two young gentlemen, sir; Mr. Henry, the present Lord, and Mr. Edward."

"And a young lady?" said Doctor Pequinillo.

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Brand; "but her I did not know."

"Which of the brothers did you know best?" enquired the Doctor.

A slight shade came over Mr. Brand's face as he replied—

"Mr. Edward, sir. They were first a great deal here together, and my master was a great deal at their father's house; but unhappy differences occurred; and you must excuse me for saying that I cannot answer any general questions without knowing to what they tend."

"I should not ask any without they had an important tendency," rejoined Doctor Pequinillo. "I do not wish in any degree that you should commit yourself by giving opinions, or reveal anything that you may

have been told to keep secret. Such matters you may have to answer elsewhere ; but I merely should desire you to give me any information which you may think yourself at liberty to afford, regarding the places at which these several persons resided, or were to be found, from the time you first knew them, till the time you lost sight of them."

"Of Miss Isabella, I can tell you nothing, sir," replied Mr. Brand, "except that she died many years ago. Mr. Harry is still living ; and any information regarding him you can obtain from himself. As to Mr. Edward, I will put down all I have to say."

"That is not necessary," said the Doctor. "You can tell me without writing."

"I'd rather put it down in writing," said Mr. Brand, "and then there can be no mistake—not that I have anything to conceal, or have been told not to reveal anything, as you seem to suppose, sir ; for I

have not ; but, as I do not know you, and you allow that your questions have an important tendency, it is as well to be accurate."

Thus saying, he sat down at his desk, and wrote for a few minutes. When he had done, he handed the paper to Doctor Pequinillo, who read it over carefully. It was a very meagre document ; but Doctor Pequinillo had learned, from some experience, that, in playing at any game, it is advisable not to show one's hand to other persons. He feared that, if he asked much more, he might fall into a mistake greatly to be avoided ; and, contenting himself with the few dates he had got, he took his leave of Mr. Brand, and hurried away.

From his house, Doctor Pequinillo proceeded at once to the Hall, which stood out before his eyes upon the hill-side, calm and quiet in the morning light, with something, he could not help thinking, of melancholy about it—though perhaps it

was only his fancy, and the power of association, which gave it that aspect to his mind. He directed his steps to the court behind the house, and asked for Mr. Willett; but upon his conversation with that personage I need not dwell. Willett was a good, simple-minded man, who, even in the sharp, and sharpening, school of *valet-de-chambreism*, had never acquired the cunning of his trade. He was always ready to tell all he knew; and he made no secret of anything from Doctor Pequinillo; but his information amounted to very little, except in regard to some of the habits of his late master, which led the Doctor, to a certain point, aright.

Nevertheless, Doctor Pequinillo, though at no one place had he made any great discoveries, had contrived, in the course of the morning, to accumulate a good many fragments of detached information; and his first task on returning to Ash Locombe, was to set to work to put them all together.

He was very skilful at this sort of joiners' work, putting in a bit here, and a bit there, and uniting them by the glue of probability. The process which he followed on the present occasion, was too long and intricate to be detailed here ; but the result was, that, at about half-past eleven o'clock, he ordered the chaise and pair, and directed the post-boy to turn his horses' heads, not towards London, but towards the famous city of Great Marlow, which place, it may be satisfactory to the reader to know, he reached in perfect safety ; but not there did he stop. On the contrary, horses on were ordered immediately; and, in about four minutes and a half, Doctor Pequinillo was plunging into the very heart of the Home of the Beech Trees.

As it is always expedient to leave a friend in the midst of an adventure, and as Cervantes himself, our great Master, breaks off a chapter abruptly in the midst of one

of the momentous combats of his hero, at this point will we quit Doctor Pequinillo and suffer him to roll on as far as he thought fit, with the brief sunshine of the early year beginning to wane as he proceeded.

CHAPTER X.

NEARLY a week had passed at Waldon Hall since the return of Mistress Westwood and her daughter from London ; and a melancholy week it was, or at least the greater part of it. No news, no tidings, not even a hint, to keep hope alive ; and poor Mary was indeed very anxious. Nevertheless, she was happier, better in health, than she had been. I do not mean to represent her quite as an angel, as the confessions I am about to make on her behalf will show. For Julian's safety, for his health, for his fate, she was still terribly apprehensive ; but it must be ac-

knownedged that the news which had been brought by Henry Denison had proved a vast relief to her. That Julian Ludlow had not quarrelled with Sir William Colefoxe at the house of an infamous woman, and on that woman's account, took at least half the burthen from Mary's heart. If her feelings were not altogether unselfish—if the bitterness of heart she had experienced, had partaken of wounded pride and injured affection—if it did not altogether spring from consideration for Julian's own character and reputation,—can we blame her? Can we blame her, either, if, when the false report was contradicted, she rejoiced to find that Julian had not violated his faith to her—that he had done nothing which could render him unworthy of her affection?

Certainly not; yet the sensations of relief which she experienced, led her on to trains of thought, to questions with her own heart, which agitated her much. Could her affection for Julian be of so

calm, and cold, and sisterly a nature as she had believed it to be, if such a spice of jealousy could enter into her heart at the report which had reached her? Could she have so grieved at the very suspicion? Could she have so rejoiced when it was done away? To try herself, as it were, she presented to her own imagination Julian Ludlow marrying some one else; and Mary trembled at what she found beneath the veil.

But women have a great art of flying from their own convictions; and Mary dared not go far with the investigation. Like a child exploring some dark passage, she not only went a certain way, and then stopped; but she ran back again in alarm. She strove to persuade herself that she was indulging in foolish fancies—that she was asking herself questions neither necessary nor pertinent. She resolved that she would love Julian Ludlow only as a sister; and it was not worth while, she thought, to ask if she had ever loved him otherwise.

Still the very fact of having pryed so far, was not without its consequences. Her anxiety for Julian's safety became mingled with a sort of melancholy thoughtfulness regarding herself, her own situation, her future. She shunned entering boldly into the kingdom of her own heart ; but she wandered in thought round its precincts. Like the prophet, she looked at it from afar. She became fond of long and solitary rambles in the park—through the neighbouring fields and lanes, and in the little church-yard, close by the park wall.

It was on the fifth day after her return, on coming back in the evening from a long drive with her mother, that she found Mr. Ludlow had been up at the house ; and, on the following day, a messenger, who had been sent down to enquire if anything had been heard of Julian, and to ask Mr. Ludlow to come up again that morning, brought back from him a hurried though respectful note, to the effect that he and his wife were at that moment setting out

for Sittingbourne, having received intelligence from a friend that Julian had been detained there by severe illness.

"We think it better to go to him at once," said Mr. Ludlow, in continuation, "although we are assured he is quite convalescent, and will be able to return in a few days to Waldon."

This, though certainly joyful intelligence, did not diminish the somewhat melancholy shadow which had fallen over Mary Westwood. Was it that she felt the time of trial was coming near? Was it that she doubted her own firmness, that she disbelieved her own reasonings and arguments? Was it that she felt there was something hidden in her heart that she did not dare to look at? I cannot tell; but she pondered very sadly over misty images, which even the joy of knowing that Julian was safe, and the hope of soon seeing him again, could not dispel.

The following day was showery, during the morning; but, towards noon, the sky

cleared, and the sun shone out. The park looked very beautiful, and green, and fresh. The air was balmy, and almost too soft for the season ; and Mary, with her bonnet merely thrown on, but not tied, sauntered out through the glass doors, upon the terrace and flower garden, without any intention of going above a quarter of a mile from the house. She wandered on farther than she intended, however. The birds were trying their early notes upon every tree, and all the world looked bright and joyful ; but there is nothing on earth so melancholy as the sound and sight of happiness to those who are sorrowful ; and deeper and deeper became poor Mary Westwood's gloom, as she pursued her way down the little path which led to the lower part of the park.

It was a path she had often taken lately, leading only to a small gate in the park wall which opened into the church-yard, and by which the family had been accustomed to proceed on Sunday to join in the

service of the day. Many a sweet memory was connected with the way, in addition to the associations with the building itself. Remembrance could run back till it lost itself in the misty days of infancy; and could trace, year by year, the recurrence of many a Sabbath past with those who were never to be seen again. Something, too, in the very aspect and atmosphere of a church, and in the thoughts with which it connects itself, has a strong attraction for those who mourn. It is a place where, by habit, the mind detaches itself, as far as it ever can be detached, from the thoughts of earth—where the burden of temporal griefs, and worldly hopes, and mere transitory cares, is cast down, and the spirit, freed from its weary “fardel,” springs up lightly towards the throne of God with higher and purer aspirations. The very memory is balm; and Mary felt more quiet, more tranquil, more resigned to whatever might come, when wandering amongst the graves beneath the shadow of the

church, or sitting on the stone bench under the porch, than at any other time since her father's death.

Almost instinctively, her steps were now turned in that direction ; and, passing the gate, she entered the church-yard just as the old verger was taking his way home to dinner. It was a Saturday, and the old man had been arranging the interior of the building for the services on the following day ; but age and rheumatism made him slow, and it was usually late on the Saturday afternoon before his task was ended. He bowed low to the young lady as he passed ; and Mary paused to speak a kindly word to him, but went on immediately after, and saw that he had left the keys in the door of the church. On the front of the building there was a sun-dial with an old inscription round it, in Gothic letters, exhorting the observer, in rather quaint and homely language, to remember that Time was fleeting from him ; but a large mass of ivy, some branches

of which had detached themselves from the wall, and swayed far out beyond the buttress, intercepted the rays of the sun, though it was shining brightly, and cast a shadow over two or three of the hours marked on the dial. Mary found some fanciful affinity between the shaded dial and her own life ; and, with a sigh, she walked into the porch of the church, and opened the door. Just over the pew in which the family usually sat, was placed a monumental tablet, which had often attracted her attention. It bore upon it, sculptured in rude relief, what seemed a presumptuous emblem, though conceived in no irreverent spirit. From the top of the tablet came what was intended to represent a widening ray of light ; and, just where the ray was broadest, appeared the figure of a dove flying upwards, while underneath was written—

“ From earth to Heaven,
So be thy thoughts given.”

Mary walked slowly along the aisle; and, resting one hand on the edge of the pew, gazed up at the tablet. She had not been two seconds there, however, when the sound of the church door opening, caused her to turn suddenly round, and her eyes instantly fell upon Julian Ludlow; so thin, so pale, that it was like his spectre rather than himself.

The time, of trial came upon her more quickly than she had expected; but there is a blessed alacrity in woman's heart to arm itself for such moments, which served her well even then. Men might have been hours considering how to act; but Mary's conduct was resolved in an instant. Advancing to Julian with outstretched hands, she exclaimed—

“Oh, how glad I am to see you! You cannot tell, dear Julian, all that mamma and I have suffered from anxiety on your account!”

Julian started at the sight of her;

and, if he had been pale before, he was still more deadly pale now.

Oh, how strange it is, that, often in this life, the most coveted blessing becomes, from the emotions with which it combines itself, more terrible than agony, shaking us well nigh to dissolution. Six weeks before, how gladly would Julian Ludlow have met Mary Westwood! how eagerly would he have sprang to greet her! how soon would his arms have been around her! how warmly would his lips have pressed her cheek! But now he stood like a statue, rooted to the stone pavement of the church. He dared not move, he dared not speak, for fear the overpowering feeling should burst forth, and overwhelm both him and her. Nor did her words of glad affection, and her look of eager tenderness, in the least mitigate the awful struggle. Far, far from it. The task upon him was weighty enough already; but another, still more terrible, seemed now cast upon him.

"She has heard nothing of it," he said to himself. "She has no suspicion—she has no doubt ; and I must chill this warm affection—must freeze the sparkling current of her love, and, in the blight of my own heart's best feelings, must blight hers also."

He could not refrain from taking the extended hands, though he trembled like an aspen as he touched her ; and all he could utter, was, while he gazed at her with a sad, sad look,

"Oh, dear Mary, I have been very, very ill."

"I know you have, Julian," replied Mary. "We heard of it only yesterday." And then she added, divining, with that spirit of deep insight which women so frequently possess, all that was passing in his breast, "I would have come to you directly, and my mother too, I am sure, if we had not been told that you were recovering rapidly."

"I could not expect it—I could not hope it," said Julian.

"Why not?" asked Mary, in a lower tone, not untouched by sadness. "Who should attend upon you but a sister, and one who, believe me, Julian, will ever be a mother to you."

Julian bent his head, bowed down by feelings indescribable. Oh, the perverse heart of man! What would he have had? It was a relief to him to find that she knew all; yet some pain mingled with it that she felt not—at least, expressed not.

"You tremble, Julian, and are very pale," continued Mary. "Come out into the free air of the porch, and let us sit there and look upon the sunshine. You will be better soon—you must be better for all our sakes."

"I shall—I shall, dear Mary," he answered. "Give me but a few minutes, and I shall be well enough to do all that I

ought—to say all that I ought. I am very feeble—feeble in body and in mind ; but I shall gain strength by degrees.”

They walked out hand and hand into the church porch, and sat down together on the stone bench; and Mary suffered him to remain quiet for a time, gathering up her own strength, too, for that which was to follow. Resolution is a woman's virtue; and her energies increased with the time of trial. At length, she thought it better to go on. She feared that farther meditation might shake rather than nerve him; and she said,

“Of course you are coming to the Hall, Julian? Let us walk on together.”

“No, indeed, Mary,” replied Julian, looking up, and speaking with greater firmness. “I had no intention of venturing near the Hall. I came hither, because it is a place where we have often sat side by side in other days—a place that must be ever dear to memory, hallowed by the brightest recollections of my life. But oh,

dearest Mary! sad and bitter hours are before me. I must tear myself away from this scene—from those I love best—from those objects which are the most fondly remembered. I must try to blot out from memory a part of life. Oh, what would I give for one draught of Lethe!"

"Nay—nay, Julian," said Mary, soothingly. "Call better thoughts to counsel. I, too, have suffered much since we met, from many things."

"I see it," he said, sadly.

"Well, then, for my sake," she pursued, "call resolution to your aid, as I have done. Let us both forget that for a few brief weeks we regarded ourselves as any other than brother and sister. Let us return to the dear relationship of our early youth. Let us feel all that we used to feel when we sported together in that park as children, and make our happiness for life in the nearness and the dearth of the tie between us."

Julian felt that it would be more diffi-

cult than ever ; but he felt also how desolate that conviction made his own heart, and he would not wholly crush out the purer and the higher hopes of hers.

"It may be so, after a while, dear Mary," he said ; "but, believe me, on every account, it would be better for me to be absent for a time. It would, indeed, my dear sister. Time, patience, thought, religion, honour, honesty, will come to my aid, and give me support and strength under all I have to bear. You yourself cannot tell what it is I feel, nor can I explain it to you ; for it is a state of such utter darkness of the spirit, that I can see nothing in it myself. Time—time only—can give me back to light ; and I have too much self-reproach already, to endure to make it greater by lingering here, when my heart tells me I ought to be far away."

"But why self-reproach ?" she asked, somewhat eagerly.

"For indulging such feelings as I have indulged, without your poor father's

consent ; and still more for uttering one word of them to you. It is a just retribution, Mary. My offence has punished my offence."

Mary looked down and mused. His words suggested to her mind a new train of thoughts—of thoughts that made her thrill strangely ; and yet on which she did not dare to let her mind repose. She had known her father well—as well as any child can know a parent ; and a trembling hope rose up again in her mind, too faint, too feeble, to be rested on. She gave but one moment to the dream, and then woke up, and drove it from her.

" But what do you intend to do, Julian ?" she asked, adding with a faint smile, " You shall do nothing without my consent and approbation. Nor must you ever leave me again, so long without letting me hear of you, Julian. I can bear anything but that."

" I will not do so," he replied, " nor should it have been so now, but I have

been too ill to write. What I intend to do, I will tell you at once, dear Mary. I heard from a friend that you were in London, and came hither, both to make enquiries which are now unnecessary, and to see those who have been parents to me indeed. I found, on my arrival, that Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow set out but yesterday to see me. Not finding me at Sittingbourne, they will, most likely, return to their home to-morrow, and till then I will wait to see them. Afterwards I shall go to London for a few days; and then—”

“To Oxford?” asked Mary. “Oh, do go to Oxford, pursue your studies there, gain honour and distinction, mingle with your old companions and friends. It would do you good—indeed, it would do you good. The very occupation—the effort—the object—will be a relief, a happiness.”

Julian shook his head mournfully.

“I have no object here,” he answered.
“Life is a blank. All that seemed once a

prize to ambition, is now gone—ambition itself is a vain shadow.—No, no, Mary; the only course for me is to wander hither and thither for a time, changing incessantly the scene, and letting nothing rest so long upon my thoughts as to lose any of the slight interest it may possess. From London I shall go back to the continent, and visit all lands and places I have not yet seen. Then, when I am calmer, firmer, more resolute, I will return, dear Mary, and perhaps—perhaps in the end, your dear visions may be realized.”

“But promise me two things, Julian,” said Mary. “First that you will not quit Waldon without letting me and my mother know two or three hours at least before you go.”

“It will be to-morrow,” answered Julian firmly, “or if Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow return very late, I shall start on the following morning early.”

“Never mind, you must make me the promise,” returned Mary, “and the same

with regard to London. You must not leave London without writing to me two whole days before you depart."

"Well, I promise," he answered; "but some one is coming, Mary—the old verger—I thought I should have found him here when I came; but I cannot talk to him now, with you by my side."

"Then come into the park," returned Mary. "You surely will not go without seeing my mother?—You do not know how she loves and esteems you."

Julian shook his head.

"I must not, Mary," he answered. "I must not. I feel that even this lingering is wrong."

He took her hand in his, and pressed it warmly and earnestly, adding, in a low voice, trembling with deep emotion—

"It is like tearing body and soul asunder, thus to part with you; but it is right, it is needful. Farewell, my dear sister—Farewell!" And, suddenly loosing her hand,

he turned down the path before she could utter another word, and took the way towards the village.

The old verger met him as he passed, and exclaimed—"Ah, Mr. Julian!" in a tone of kindly recognition; but Julian's eyes were turned a far, as if fixed upon a spot in the distant hills; and he neither saw nor heard the old man.

Mary darted through the gate into the park, with her heart beating wildly, and her brain all whirling. She would not even try to collect her thoughts, for fear that, in their united strength, they should overpower her utterly; but hurried on almost at a run, towards the house. Without an instant's pause, she sprang up the steps, entered the hall door, and went straight to the little drawing-room where her mother sat.

"I have seen him, mother," she cried—

"I have seen Julian."

"Where is he? What has happened?"

asked Mistress Westwood, alarmed at her daughter's expression of countenance.

"He has gone back to Waldon," answered Mary, in the same wild tone. "He would not stay with me; he would not come up here. He has left us, and, I fear for ever."

She gazed upon her mother's face for a moment in silence after she had uttered these last words, and then, casting herself upon the sofa, hid her eyes with her hands, exclaiming—

"He cannot—oh, no, he cannot—be my brother."

A look of deep distress and anxiety came upon Mistress Westwood's face; but she answered, in as calm and quiet a tone as she could—

"We have no power to solve the mystery, my child. But in this instance Julian was right. Time perhaps will remove all doubt, which is the most painful kind of anguish; but, till then, it is as well that he

should be away. Yet I trust we shall know where to find him, Mary; for I must write to him, and assure him of my regard; and we must both do all we can to mitigate, rather than to increase his present sorrows. In the meantime, my child,—”

She was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, announcing that a strange, foreign-looking gentleman wished to speak with her.

“I can hardly see him at present,” said Mistress Westwood, in a faltering voice. “Say that I am very particularly engaged.”

“He says that his business is of great importance, madam; otherwise I should not have let him in,” replied the servant. “I thought, however, that it would be better to inform you, and so took him into the library.”

The man was drawing towards the door, to obey the orders he had received; but

Mistress Westwood rose, with a deep sigh, saying—" Well, I will see him. One cannot tell what he may have to say."

And she followed the servant out of the room.

CHAPTER XI.

JULIAN LUDLOW returned straight to the house in which all his early days had been spent, and went up at once to the neat, small room which he had tenanted during the holidays from the time he went to a public school. An aspect of comfort, and quiet, homely neatness was about it. The dimity curtains of the bed and of the windows, as white as snow; the gay colours of the Kidderminster carpet on the floor; the neat paper, representing branches and green leaves upon the wall, making it look like a bower in a forest; the pure,

clean ceiling overhead ; the clear streaming in of the sunshine through the two small-paned windows ; the ranges of book-cases round ; the well-polished tables and chairs ; some fine engravings with oaken frames ; and a number of little knick-knacks which he had purchased for himself at different times,—all gave it an air of calm, sweet, domestic repose, which contrasted sadly with the feelings of his heart.

He was in "his home, his home no more ;" and oh, how he wished that he had been born in that peaceful station, in that happy mediocrity ; that no misplaced ambition had ever led any one to force him forward into another position ; that he had sought for no distinction, coveted no honours, received no refinement, but had been through life only as the son of a humble, honest man, with sufficient means and calm contentment. It is wonderful how zealously we harvest curses, and leave the richer and the better grain to wither !

But wishes were all in vain ; and, though

the comfortable sights around him, sank into his very spirit, they imbued it with a still deeper shade of melancholy, by their contrast with what he was, and what he would have been. He locked the door, and passed the time partly in meditation, partly in prayer—for Julian Ludlow was neither ashamed nor afraid to pray; and he knew that comfort and strength was only to be had from one source. Hours slipped away without his appearing again; and the maid came up and knocked, to know if he would not take some refreshment; but Julian dismissed her without unlocking the door, or enquiring what she wanted. He was busy, he said, speaking to her through the thin partition, and did not wish to be disturbed at that moment; and when she told him what she had come for, and pressed him to take some food, he replied that he did not want any, and that he could do very well till the next morning.

The girl retired disappointed; but when, just as the evening was closing in, a chaise

drove up to the door, and Mr. and Mistress Ludlow got out, she told them, in an anxious tone, that Mr. Julian had returned; but that he had a strange, wild look about the eyes, and had shut himself into his room, from which he had not come forth during the whole day.

"He looks very ill, Sir," she said, addressing her master, "and I am really afraid that all is not right *here*." And the girl put her hand upon her forehead significantly.

Hal Ludlow and his wife both made for the stair-foot at once; but Emma, with all a mother's feelings as strong as ever about her, was the first to reach the door of Julian's room. She knocked gently, saying, in a low tone,

"Julian—Julian! It is I—your mother, Julian."

In another moment, she was in the young man's arms. Her joy might be tarnished a little by the sight of his careworn features and sickly aspect; but he

was there—restored to her—once more, in her own dwelling, and in her own arms; and the cup of her satisfaction seemed full to overflowing.

Towards Mistress Ludlow, Julian was all that is kind, and tender, and affectionate; and to Mr. Ludlow, too, he held out his hand frankly, knowing well that the worthy man had acted throughout with the very best intentions towards him.

“I am your mother still, Julian—I am your mother still,” cried poor Mistress Ludlow. “If you are not my own child, my dear boy, you are as dear to me as any child can be.”

“I know it, dear mother,” answered Julian; “and I always have felt, and always shall feel, towards you as a son. So heaven help me, as I looked round this little room this morning, I would have given worlds to know that it was my own, and you two my father and mother. But let us not talk of these things, now. I would fain throw off some part of my grief, and

pass this evening, calmly at least, if not happily."

"But why should you grieve, my dear boy?" said Mistress Ludlow. "Why should you suffer even this to affect you so sadly?"

Julian was silent, and gazed down very mournfully, for a few moments; but after a pause, Mr. Ludlow took up the conversation, saying,

"I dare say you think I have been very wrong, Julian, in acting as I have done; but I was urged very earnestly by my best friend, and I had not the heart to refuse him. Besides, my poor wife was very ill; and I believed that if I had told her of her own baby's death, it would have been destruction to her also."

"Ay, that was the principal cause, Hal," said his wife; "and I am sure I do not know how it might have gone with me then, had you not done as you did, although in this case, as in all others, we have had

to pay dearly for happiness purchased by deceit. But let us go down stairs, and, as Julian says, try to pass the time pleasantly. I dare say days will soon come when we shall forget all about this—I hope so, at least, for my part.”

Julian shook his head sadly, but followed Emma down the stairs, hoping for some opportunity of conversing freely with Mr. Ludlow on all that had occurred. Good Mistress Ludlow, however, left them not a moment alone together for some time, busying herself with making them all comfortable, not exactly with un-lady-like bustle—for nature had made her lady-like—but with affectionate eagerness which Julian well understood.

At length, however, she quitted the room for a moment, to give orders for supper; and Julian and Mr. Ludlow turned towards the subject of their thoughts so eagerly that, at first, they interrupted one another. Julian knew, however, that

his foster-mother would not be long absent; and, laying his hand upon Mr. Ludlow's arm, he said, with great earnestness—

“Tell me but one thing before anything more is said. Am I, or am I not, the son of Mr. Julian Westwood?”

“I suppose there is no doubt of it,” replied Mr. Ludlow.

He was proceeding to explain the whole circumstances of Julian's entrance under his roof, as he had previously explained them to Doctor. Pequinillo, when Mistress Ludlow returned to the room, and he stopped. All that Julian obtained was a bitter confirmation of his worst fears; and, without any power of restraining himself, he fell into one of those deep and gloomy fits of thought which of late had so frequently overshadowed him.

It was impossible for Emma Ludlow not to perceive that her entrance had checked her husband in something that he was saying, and that what he had said had deeply and painfully affected one who was already

sorrowful enough. She had been anxious to avoid any fresh allusion to the past—to surround Julian, as it were, for that night, with images of all that was pleasant and cheerful in former days, without suffering them to be contrasted with the darker and sadder present ; but she saw that the attempt would now be vain. She did not, indeed, know the particulars of what had passed between her husband and Julian in her absence ; but, with a woman's instinct, she divined its general character ; and, as she saw that the subject could not be banished from thought, she determined to speak of it herself with woman's tenderness.

After they had sat some time at their quiet supper, she laid her hand gently upon him who had been so long her son, and said—

“ You are very sad, Julian, and I can guess at a great deal that you feel ; but you know not, my dear, what a power Time has in soothing all such afflictions as

you now suffer. We may never be able to forget, indeed—I know that those who love well and truly never can forget; for I remember the two parents whom I lost within one week of each other, when I was but fifteen, as distinctly as ever; still, Time has a strange power which makes things, even the most bitter, sweet to memory. If we could, or if we would, but foresee the change which is wrought in us, we should not mourn so bitterly, so unresignedly as we do for any of the hopes that pass away, or for the affections that are blighted. I remember that dear Miss Mary Westwood, who was like a sister to me while she lived, used to say, when speaking of her dead mother, that the effect of time in changing painful things to sweet memories, gave her some idea of what must be the effect of passing from earth to heaven. ‘I cannot but think, Emma,’ she would say, ‘that, in another state, we shall look back upon all the cares and troubles of this life with the same

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quiet smile of the heart with which we now think of the vexations and annoyances of our childhood.' Take the lesson to your heart, my dear Julian; for she was an angel who spoke it, and was then on the very verge of that world to which she looked forward. Try, therefore, to believe that some ten or twelve years hence, all that you feel now, if not passed away entirely, will be so softened, that little but a gentle—perhaps melancholy—pleasure will remain in looking back at the very sorrows of these days."

Julian had his answer ready. He felt that a persistent firmness was in his character—a strength, as it were, in the clay of which he was formed—which allowed no impressions to be easily obliterated; and he thought that, as some substances become harder and more durable when water flows over them, so would his feelings only acquire strength by the passing of time. His kind heart, however, would not suffer him to utter a word that could

give pain to one who loved him so well ;
and he replied, with a sigh—

“I trust that it will be so, dear mother ;
but I believe that the only thing which
will give me relief and comfort, will be
rapid, frequent change of scene. It may
seem selfish, ungrateful, and unmindful of
affection, to wish to leave you again so
soon ; but I am convinced that, in prefer-
ence to anything else, both of you love me
well enough to wish me to do that which is
most likely to restore my health of mind
and body ; and I am convinced that it will
be better for me to go to London, for a few
days, and then to return to the continent,
travelling through Germany, Spain, and
other countries which I have not seen, till
I feel myself sufficiently calm and strong
to resume my ordinary occupations.”

“Go, my dear Julian, go,” observed Mr.
Ludlow. “Thank God, we have got quite
enough to make you comfortable in your
travels ; and, if you truly regard Emma and
myself as your parents still, you must look

upon us as your parents in this respect also. My only object in saving money, has been for you, Julian; and now is the moment to use it for your advantage."

Julian was about to answer that he had enough; but Mistress Ludlow stopped him by saying—

"You surely will go and see Mistress Westwood first : I am certain it would be a comfort to her."

"I cannot—I cannot," ejaculated Julian, almost vehemently. "My dear mother, do not urge me. I cannot—I must not—set my foot within those doors again for many a month—perhaps for many a year. I was foolish in coming here at all, I believe; but I imagined they were in London,"

"And so they were a few days ago," said Mr. Ludlow ; "but they are at the Hall now; and I must go up to-morrow myself; for, from what I hear, it is high time that a full explanation should be given to Mistress Westwood. She does not know, I dare say ; and I must tell her, that your

father gave me the most solemn assurance that you are a legitimate child. Whether she will herself aid to search out the proofs of this previous marriage, or whether she will think it a duty to her daughter—”

“No, no no!” interrupted Emma Ludlow. “She will do nothing that is ungenerous or wrong. Perhaps she is not quite so warm-hearted as the Westwoods were; but she is not selfish or unjust. Indeed, she is very kind, my dear Hal, though she takes longer to think before she acts than her husband’s family used to do. Depend upon it she will do what is right; and if the marriage certificate of Julian’s father and mother were in her hand to-morrow, it would not be long before it reached Julian, I am quite sure.”

“And so am I,” assented Julian; “but—”

He paused, for a moment or two, thoughtfully, and then added—

“I will have no step taken in that direction. Tell Mistress Westwood what you

know, my dear father. I think, from what I know of her, it will be a relief to her, rather than otherwise, to hear that I was born in wedlock ; but acquaint her, at the same time, that I do not look upon that fact as giving me any rights, any claims ; that I will have no searches made, no investigations instituted. In a word, I would not deprive Mistress Westwood, or her daughter, who is so dear to me, of anything they possess, were all clear and distinct to-morrow. Mary would have given *me* everything she possessed," he said, in a low, thoughtful tone, "and should I wring any part of it from her?"

"Well, I must tell her mother all I know," said Mr. Ludlow. "I will go up early to-morrow ; for now that so much has been discovered, nothing must be concealed."

"I will give you a note, if you will take it to Mary," said Julian. "I promised to write to her before I left Walden; and I must keep my word, though it is little I dare write."

On the following day, about ten o'clock, Mr. Ludlow set out for the Hall, carrying with him a few brief lines from Julian. He was admitted at once to Mistress Westwood, and found her seated alone in the library. In his plain, straightforward way, Hal Ludlow communicated to her all the information he possessed in regard to the birth of Julian Ludlow ; perhaps not softening the tale quite as much as a man of greater refinement would have done ; but placing before Mistress Westwood a vivid picture of past times, in hues which she easily recognized to be those of truth. Her husband, as she had first known him, seemed to stand before her again in his description ; and a few natural tears of varied grief rose in her eyes as she listened in silence.

In the end, Mr. Ludlow informed his auditor that Mr. Westwood had, on several occasions, assured him in the most solemn manner that Julian was born in lawful mar-

riage ; and a new train of thoughts and emotions rose in Mistress Westwood's bosom.

"If he said so, it was true," she observed several times, in a low voice.

Suddenly some other considerations seemed to present themselves. The first thought was merely of her husband's undoubted integrity—of his truthfulness ; and the impression instantly was, that whatever he had said seriously must be actually the fact. From that belief she could not free herself ; yet memory brought up so many little incidents which seemed to contradict the statement he had made—so many words, acts, circumstances, in the sweet privacy of domestic life, which had ever made her believe that she had been the first and only object of that husband's affections—that she felt bewildered and perplexed. His love, and care, and kindness to Julian seemed to confirm what he had told Mr. Ludlow ; but then he had often

assured her that he had never loved any one but her. And was Julian Westwood a man to have married any one without love ?

"If he said that, it was true," repeated Mistress Westwood, looking up to her visitor's face ; "yet, Mr. Ludlow, it is very strange—I cannot reconcile this with other things. However, it must be investigated—fully investigated. Julian has a right to demand, that, after such an assertion on my husband's part, nothing should be left undone to make his real situation clear."

"He demands nothing of the kind," returned Ludlow. "On the contrary, he said last night, that he would not have any investigation whatever ; that, for the world, he would not take from you and your daughter anything you possessed."

Mistress Westwood mused ; and we will not attempt to dissect her musings. In the end, she replied—

"His generosity must not interfere with a mere act of justice. I and my daughter

have quite sufficient in any case; and, even if it were not so, his rights, whatever they are, ought to be established. Will you do me the favour, Mr. Ludlow, to tell him, with my love and kindest regards, that I wish, as a kindness to me, he would come and see me. I know his motive for abstaining; but it is absolutely necessary he should overcome it; and you may assure him that he shall see no one here but myself. Or, if he prefers it, I will go down to your house to see him—perhaps, that will be better. I cannot go very well to-day; but to-morrow—”

“I am afraid, madam, he will be gone to-morrow,” interrupted Mr. Ludlow. “This is a note from him to Miss Westwood, informing her, I believe, of his intention.”

“Then I had better go at once,” said the lady. “I will be down in an hour, Mr. Ludlow, if you will ask him to remain at home for me.”

She rang the bell as she spoke, and told

the servant who appeared, to give the note Mr. Ludlow had brought, to her daughter; and then took leave of Ludlow, adding another kind message to Julian, to whose weight of sorrow she would not have added one grain for the world.

Mr. Ludlow sped away over the fields, and by the shortest paths, and reached his own house in something less than half-an-hour.

Doors in the country remained unlocked in those days; and Mr. Ludlow entered first one room, and then another, without finding anybody. His wife had gone out at the same time with himself, upon her usual household affairs, and he ascertained that she had not yet returned; but he was anxious to hear where Julian had betaken himself; and he rang, and interrogated the maid somewhat eagerly.

"Why, he went away, sir, half-an-hour ago," replied the girl, "with a young lady in a chaise. He spoke to her for five minutes at the carriage door; then

came back, got some things out of his room, and went away with her, only bidding me tell Mistress that he would be here again in a day or two."

Mr. Ludlow was confounded.

CHAPTER XII.

If, when we have a number of guests assembled in our house on any social occasion, we pay exclusive attention to any one or two of them, leaving the rest to shift for themselves, either for refreshment or conversation, we are considered rather rude. The characters which a writer brings upon the stage are surely his guests for the time, to whom he is bound to show the same general courtesy which is expected from a host to those whom he has invited. If, therefore, we talk any longer with Julian Ludlow, and Mistress Westwood, and Mary, her daughter,

there are persons gathered together in some other corner of the room, who will indubitably think this rude ; and I must consequently take my gentle reader by the hand, and lead him after Doctor Pequinitillo.

Our excellent friend, as we have said at the termination of a recent chapter, plunged into the heart of Buckinghamshire. I believe I gave that fair county a fantastic name, borrowed from the Anglo-Saxon meaning of its modern title ; but that does not matter. Every one understood what it meant ; and so let it pass.

The next stage was a short—one only ten miles ; but the road was hilly ; the horses not the best that ever drew rusty iron, painted wood, and rotten leather, over a heavy cause-way ; and, the time being early in the year, the sun went to bed early, as the nights were cold.

From this concatenation of circumstances, it was something less than

twilight when the Doctor stopped before a large brick inn, with a yard which looked like a bit cut out of the Great Sahara—or any other desert, African or otherwise ; and the post-boy, coming to the side of the carriage, said,

“ This is the Daynton Arms, Sir.”

“ Can’t you take me on to the house at once ?” asked Doctor Pequinillo.

“ It’s more than four miles, Sir ; and the horses are dead beat,” replied the post-boy. “ They went on to Maidstone this morning. They must have a feed first.”

“ Then I’ll have another pair,” said the Doctor, proceeding to alight, although the name of a “ feed ” suggested to his mind agreeable associations.

But no horses were to be procured ; and Doctor Pequinillo had the philosophy to eat some cold pigeon pie, and drink a glass or two of sherry, although he was in haste.

In rather more than half-an-hour, however, the post-boy was again in the saddle,

and once more the Doctor was upon the way. It was in itself a very beautiful road, winding through some charming, richly-wooded valleys, passing here and there a farm-house, and touching, from time to time, on the bank of a beautiful stream; but all that Doctor Pequinillo could see, was the glistening of the water, the dark shapes of the hedge-rows, a curious old ivy-covered bridge, close by an old toll-gate, the lantern of which lent it light, and some low, dark hills, spotted with cottages, with the windows emitting cheerful gleams from within; for the reader will remember that it was now night, and the moon not up.

At length, a large pair of great gates appeared, with a lodge at the side; and the huge iron gratings, rolling back at the demand of the post-boy, the Doctor clearly perceived he had got into some gentleman's deer-park.

For about three quarters of a mile, as the chaise wended onward, a row of lights, sinking and falling as the vehicle hurried

on, up hill, and down dale, were seen from time to time through the trees; and at length, bringing his horses sharply round, with a clatter and a crack of the whip, the post-boy drove into a great court-yard, at the back of a large and very handsome mansion. A glass lantern was over one of the many doors, with a bell hanging underneath it; and the post-boy, who had been there often—the horses of the Daynton Arms being always out—applied himself to this instrument of sound, and soon brought a servant to Doctor Pequinillo's assistance.

“Pray, is Mr. Henry Denison here?” asked our friend, with an important air.

“Yes, Sir,” replied the man. “But he's—May I ask your name, Sir?”

If the Doctor had spoken like a sneak, the man would have sent him off in a minute. Pomposity works marvels.

“My name is Doctor Pequinillo,” said our friend; “and you may tell him I'm in haste.”

"Oh, sir, he'll be very glad to see you," said the man, at once. "Pray walk into the library. I will tell Mr. Henry directly." And, leading the way through a somewhat dull stone passage, he merely turned round to give a sapient shake of the head, and say—"I am afraid you will not be able to do any good, sir. He seems to me to be sinking fast."

Doctor Pequinillo was one of the wisest men in the world; and when he had nothing to say, he said nothing. He therefore followed the servant, in silence, to a very handsome library, furnished with Turkey carpets, and great arm-chairs, and pleasant large folios, and little priggish duodecimos, a bust or two, and a portrait or two, and all that could make *the living* comfortable—though one was in that house who knew that it had no effect upon the dying. There is as much philosophy in a dead rat in his hole, as in a Prince's corpse lying in state. The only true democracy is in the realm of Death.

The great, blazing wood-fire on the hearth, looked exceedingly cheerful, notwithstanding; and Doctor Pequinillo naturally walked up to it to warm himself, saying, with the idolator in the Bible—"Aha! I am warm. I have seen the fire."

He was deep in the contemplation of a portrait over the mantel-piece, with his legs receiving an exceedingly comfortable scorching below, when he heard the door open, and turned round to greet Henry Denison, who was just entering.

That gentleman received him very kindly, and with much courtesy; for, after Julian's departure from Paris, many events had occurred to give him glimpses of Doctor Pequinillo's real character; and these had changed, into respect and friendship, the rather supercilious indifference with which he first regarded him.

"Pray be seated," he said, drawing a chair for himself to the fire. "My uncle's

foolish servant made some mistake about you, and told me that there was a physician from London below ; so that I had no idea of meeting with an old acquaintance. —Have you dined? We are all in disorder in this house, just now ; for the flame of life flickers so faintly within my poor uncle, that we know not, from hour to hour, how soon it may be extinguished. But there is always something ready in the house, if you have not dined.”

“ I have, thank you,” replied Doctor Pequinillo. “ I was forced to dine, if I may so speak ; for the horses had to be baited at the Daynton Arms. The weight of a vacant quarter of an hour hung upon me ; and that is the greatest incentive to the powers of a man’s deglutition that I know of. I could well have spared the eating ; for I was in a great hurry to see you.”

“ Regarding something affecting my poor friend, Julian Ludlow, I fear,” ob-

served Henry Denison. "I have not been able to obtain any intelligence respecting him."

"Partly affecting him, and partly affecting yourself," pursued the Doctor, in a considerate tone; "but yourself, Mr. Denison, most particularly. I have explained to you that I owe a deep debt of affection and gratitude to your mother—a debt incurred in early years, for her kindness to my own poor parent; but these debts, though of long standing, only increase in weight by time—they bear interest, I may say. And yet, what I am going to do now may seem very like ingratitude. I am going to bring trouble and anxiety into your mind, at a moment when I am certain you feel much grief and apprehension for your uncle. I am going, perhaps, to deprive you of bright prospects—at all events, to overshadow them with doubt."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Henry Denison, with a faint smile. "I am somewhat of

a cynic, Doctor. Two years of India, a slight touch of liver complaint, and a constitution perhaps naturally apathetic, have made me a true Diogenes as to the minor ills of life. I do not think you can pierce me through my tub.—But pray speak plainly, and at once; for I really do not comprehend you in the least.”

“I will,” said Doctor Pequillo; “for I think, sir, you can bear it; and, if I may judge of you by your mother, you are certain to bear it well. But first, let me ask you a question or two, which will not detain us long. Your uncle, Lord Daynton, lies here very ill, I am told. Is he your only uncle?”

“He is,” answered Henry Denison, rather sharply.

“Did you never have another uncle, on the mother’s side?” asked the Doctor.

Henry Denison’s face flushed a good deal; but he answered, at once—

“I had. He died when I was quite young—more than twenty years ago.”

The Doctor's keen eye was fixed upon him with a glance so searching as almost to offend him ; and the young man drew himself stiffly up in his chair.

"May I ask if you have been ever made acquainted with the particular circumstances of your uncle's life?" enquired Doctor Pequinillo.

"With some of them, sir," replied Henry Denison, in a stern, cold tone ; "but they were of so painful a character that the subject is never now alluded to in the family; and I must request that it may not be entered upon now."

"Only one question more," said Doctor Pequinillo, "and then I have done. Permit me to ask if you are aware that your uncle Edward was married?"

"Good Heavens! No!" exclaimed his companion, starting up from his chair. "Do you mean to say that that is positively a fact?"

"I do," answered Doctor Pequinillo. "I can produce the register in which the

marriage was recorded : I can produce the clergyman by whom the ceremony was performed : I can produce one of the witnesses who signed the register."

Henry Denison put his hand to his brow, and remained for several moments silent, letting his mind run over all the consequences which the intelligence he had just received might involve.

"Had he any children?" he asked, at length.

It was now Doctor Pequinillo's turn to pause.

"I cannot say positively," he replied ;
"and I do not think that I should be justified, judging by your tone just now, in informing you of what I merely suspect. I came here, Mr. Denison, to communicate the important discovery I have lately made; knowing that it greatly affected your interests, and believing that I could frankly ask you to aid me in fathoming a deep mystery to the bottom, although the result might be disagreeable, even painful, to

yourself. But, to speak candidly, you have not received the intelligence, nor met the questions it was necessary to put, altogether in the manner I expected ; and I think it may be better for me to pursue my enquiries unassisted."

"I beg your pardon for my irritability, Doctor," said Henry Denison, taking his hand. "I do not believe you are aware how painful is the wound you were touching somewhat roughly. There is but one dark spot in the history of my family. There is but one blot upon our name, during ten generations. That blot was fixed upon it by my uncle's conduct. He died, sir, in prison, by his own hand, to escape execution as a felon." The young man cast himself into his chair again, and covered his eyes with his hands.

"I did not know this, indeed, Mr. Denison," returned Doctor Pequinillo, earnestly,

"or I would have put my questions differently. I knew that he was wild, graceless, and that he died early. I remember hear-

ing, when I was young, that he gambled deeply ; but I knew nothing more."

"Ay—that gambling!" exclaimed Henry Denison. "It is the high-way to every other crime. With him it was a madness—worse than a madness. But what has become of his poor wife? Her's must have been an unhappy fate."

"It was," said Doctor Pequinillo ; "but it was brief. She is at rest now. She has been dead many years."

"Who was she?" asked Henry Denison. "Some person of inferior station, I suppose."

"A lady, of race equal to your own mother's," replied Doctor Pequinillo, "and of a family as wealthy as that from which you spring on either side—perhaps even more wealthy."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Henry, in great surprise. "How, then, came it never known?—How came it never spoken of?"

"Perhaps from the same motives that prevent your uncle's history from being

alluded to in this house," replied Doctor Pequinillo; "but I speak vaguely, and merely by guess. The matter is as much a mystery to me as to any one. I may, however, be permitted to imagine, that the members of the lady's family may have thought the alliance as great a stain upon them as your uncle's acts were considered by his own relations."

"True—true," said Henry Denison. "You know her name, of course?"

"I do," replied Doctor Pequinillo. He hesitated for a moment or two, and then added slowly, and in a low tone, as if he were afraid that other ears would hear, "I was looking over, but yesterday, an old, country parish register, for another purpose, when I suddenly came upon two leaves gummed together at the edges. Curiosity is, I fear, a vice with me; and, by running my fingers between the two pages, I easily separated them. There was only one entry between them; and that related to the marriage of the Honourable Edward

Escot, second son of the Earl of Daynton, to—" He paused, and hesitated again.

"To whom?—to whom?" cried Henry Denison, impatiently.

"To Mary, only daughter of Robert Westwood, of Waldon Hall," replied Doctor Pequinillo.

For full three minutes, Henry Denison remained perfectly still and silent; then, starting up, he paced the room for some time, with a hasty and irregular step.

"I see it all," he cried—"I see it all—at least, I see which way your suspicions tend; and they are right—they must be right. It was blood, Doctor—It was blood that made me always love him so.—But let us sit down and talk this matter over quietly."

As he spoke, the door opened, and a personage, dressed as a butler or a groom of the chambers, came in, with a low bow and a very grave face, saying—

"My lady wishes to see your lordship immediately."

"Alas, then, my poor uncle is dead?" said Henry Denison, gazing at the man.

"I am sorry to announce that it is so, my lord," replied the servant.

"Do not give me that title till you know that it is mine, Mr. Lloyd," said Henry Denison: "at all events, wait awhile."

The man stared, with a very vast surprise; but Henry Denison turned to Doctor Pequillo, saying—

"I must leave you for a little, my dear sir; but I will not be longer away than is absolutely necessary; for the matter we have been talking of is of such deep interest, that it must be discussed immediately, even in the painful events that are around us here.—Take care of this gentleman, Lloyd, and treat him in all respects as one of my dearest friends."

Thus saying, he left the room.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN that part of Maddox-Street running from George-Street, Hanover-Square, into Regent-Street, the houses, as my readers in metropolitan topography must know, are generally exceedingly small, and only recommended by a proximity to that vestry-door at which so many ladies and gentlemen go in single, and come out in couples. There are, however, some better houses in the street, of a tolerable size and comfortable proportions ; but it is not a fashionable place of residence, and seems, in the eye of the great world, merely as a funnel or an

aqueduct—a channel or a stream to pass through.

At the door of one of these better houses, was a very neat, plain carriage, with a man out of livery standing beside it. He had knocked, and was waiting for the door to be opened. A rosy-armed maid servant at length appeared, looked for a moment at the carriage, and then, with a good humoured smile, advanced towards it, seeming to recognize the person within.

“Is the Doctor at home?” asked a very melodious voice, as the girl came near.

“No, ma’am,” answered the maid; “but mistress received a letter yesterday, telling her he would be back directly. There is a whole heap of letters up-stairs—two of them for you. Won’t you walk in?”

The lady in the carriage bade the man open the door, and alighted, with a figure of exquisite beauty and symmetry, displaying extraordinary grace in every movement, but so small, that, had it not been for a certain composedness of manner and

matronliness of dress, one might have taken her for a girl of eleven or twelve years old.

Straight up to a drawing-room, on the first floor, she took her way, evidently well acquainted with the premises, and turned over the letters which were lying on the table, without ceremony. One of them seemed to attract her attention more than the rest. It was badly folded, badly sealed, and addressed in a great, sprawling, ugly hand, with Doctor Pequinillo's name hard to the right, and the name of the street underneath, to the left.

"It was a funny looking man who brought that," said the maid, seeing the lady eye it with some curiosity. "He was very smart, indeed, with a blue satin neck-cloth, and a great brooch all sparkling; but his face looked as if it had not been washed since his beard began to grow—and such a hooked nose as he had! It seemed looking into his mouth."

"Has the letter been here long?" asked the lady.

"Not a minute before you came," answered the maid; "and the man said he would come back again in an hour, when I told him the Doctor would soon be here; for he seemed mighty anxious to see him. He wanted to come in, and wait; but I would not let him, he seemed such a queer-looking person."

"Well, I shall wait, at all events," said Marguerite; and, seating herself at the table, she opened one of the two letters addressed to herself, which was but a brief note, soon dispatched. The other was a much longer epistle in Doctor Pequinillo's hand; and over it Marguerite pored for some time with evident interest. Sometimes it seemed to make her sad enough; at others, a bright, playful smile shone upon her pretty countenance, as the peculiar traits of Doctor Pequinillo's character peeped out in the epistle.

"Well," she said to herself, as she ended it, "he is the dearest and best man in the world. To think of such a man being a conjurer, when Nature made him for a Howard! Though, if he had been a Howard, he'd have contrived to set all the poor prisoners free. If he could not have got them out through the door, he would through the window." She then turned to the first page, and read the letter all over again, with fond affection for the writer, which made every word as valuable in her eyes as a word from the Koran to a Turk.

As she paused and pondered between the sentences, and sometimes between the half sentences, the reading, and the pausing, and the pondering, occupied a considerable time ; and after that was over, she sat with the letter in her hand, and the hand resting on her knee, in what is poetically called a "brown study," till she was roused by a pretty sharp rap at the street door.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Marguerite; and she listened, with bended head, for the well-known step.

The street door was opened, and a voice—not Doctor Pequinillo's—said something which Marguerite did not hear distinctly. The maid then answered—

"He is not come back yet, sir."

"He has never been out, I am sure," rejoined the first speaker, in accents which would be difficult for any purely European tongue to imitate—smacking strongly of the Gileaditish Shibboleth. "Why I saw you let in a lady, the moment after you refused me."

"That was his ward, sir," returned the maid, still maintaining her civil tone; "she comes in and goes out when she likes."

Another tongue, which had hitherto been silent, took up the conversation here, speaking with a strong foreign accent, but very different from that of the preceding male voice.

Without intending anything like a dou-

ble meaning, Marguerite had been accustomed to act all her life—to act for herself; and sometimes for others—to act rapidly and decidedly; and she immediately determined what to do, when she heard the last speaker say, in very courteous tones—

“Fie, fie, Mr. Isaacson! You should not suppose that a young lady would tell you what is not true. The fact is, madam, Mr. Isaacson has something of great importance to say to my friend, Doctor Pequinillo, and must see him as soon as possible—something of great importance to the Doctor himself. If you would ask the young lady, his ward—”

Marguerite instantly opened wide the door, which was ajar, and said—

“Ask those gentlemen to walk up, Kitty.”

She had to raise her voice, and repeat the request; for a carriage was rolling along the street when it was first uttered; but, a moment or two after, the grave and dignified M. de Benis entered, followed by

his little Jew landlord, Isaacson, dressed out in his Sabbath finery.

"Be seated, gentlemen," said Marguerite, with the dignity of an oriental princess, which added at least six inches to her stature. "Doctor Pequinillo is out—out of town, in fact—in Buckinghamshire ; and when he may return is perfectly uncertain ; for, although he says in this letter that he will probably be back by noon to-day, his movements are always very doubtful. Is there anything that I can communicate to him when he arrives ?"

"Why, no—no—I fancy I must carry my goods to another market," said Mr. Isaacson, in a coarse tone. "If he's not at home, I cannot help it. He said that there were people who would give a thousand pound if I could prove that Mr. Julian Westwood never had a son. Now, 'people' always means oneself. So, if he has got the thousand pound ready, *I* am ready ; and if he has not, why, I can't

help it. I dare say there are others who will pay as handsomely for what I have got to tell."

"Don't be so impatient—don't be so impatient," said M. de Benis, in a soothing tone.

Then, turning to Marguerite, he was proceeding to explain the object of their visit, when that lady, who recognized the accent of his country at once, and saw that to speak in English fettered him, begged him to employ French; and the old gentleman immediately, with an infinitely accelerated movement of the tongue, informed her that Mr. Isaacson had in his possession some papers highly important to the Westwood family; but that, thinking they might be equally important to Doctor Pequinillo, he had not yet given them up to any one.

"He is extremely anxious to dispose of them at once," added M. de Benis; "but he demands a thousand pounds, which I

think enormous. However, for fear my excellent friend should lose what he desires, I came up here with Mr. Isaacson, as he told me the maid had refused to admit him, although he was sure the Doctor was at home."

"That he certainly is not," answered Marguerite. "Can Mr. Isaacson really prove that Mr. Julian Westwood never had a son?" She hesitated a moment, and coloured slightly, when she added the words—"A son, legitimate or illegitimate?"

"So he says," replied M. de Benis. "I cannot tell myself; because he has not communicated to me the source of his information."

Marguerite turned to Mr. Isaacson, and repeated in English the question she had put to the old French gentleman.

"I shan't say anything more about it," returned Mr. Isaacson, who could be very dogged and rude in making a bargain, when he thought he had got the whip

hand of any one else. "I come here to sell something. I tell you what it is. You can judge yourself, whether it is worth the money to your friend, or guardian, or whatever he is."

"To him, it is not worth a penny," replied Marguerite ; "but to a friend of his, it may be worth what you ask, if it be really that which you say. However, we never buy anything, sir, without examining it ; and if Doctor Pequinillo does give the money, it will be only on the condition of your doing completely what you say. If you choose to tell me the particulars, I will communicate them to him."

"Well—well," said Mr. Isaacson, abruptly rising from his chair. "I dare say I could get my money somewhere else, if I did but know where to find the right man ; but I'll soon manage that. I am not going to tell all about it before two witnesses—don't you think it."

"Well, then, tell me alone," said Marguerite. "I dare say this gentleman will

be kind enough to walk into the dining-room there, while you explain yourself."

"Oh, certainly," cried M. de Benis ; and proceeding through the folding-doors which led into a room behind, he closed them tightly after him.

"Now, sir," said Marguerite, fixing her bright eyes steadily upon Mr. Isaacson. But that personage was proof against bright eyes ; and he hesitated and be-thought him a good deal.

"Well," he said, at length, "I'll tell you this much. I have got in my possession some papers of great importance to all the Westwood people—to a man called Julian Ludlow—and to four or five other persons, all very rich, who can afford to pay for them well. Whoever gets them will get a prize, I can tell you. I shall only say further, that they prove Mr. Julian Westwood never had a son at all. I paid for them with a lot of other things ; and I have a right to make my money on them. So, now, if you have got the money your-

self, you had better buy them. I'll answer for it you can turn a penny on them."

Marguerite smiled, saying—"I have not got the money—here, at least—and I have nothing to do with any of the persons concerned; but I dare say Doctor Pequinillo will buy them, if you like to wait."

She mused while she spoke, strongly tempted, it must be owned; but she well knew the sort of person she was dealing with; and when Mr. Isaacson replied—"No, no, I shan't wait—I will sell them directly," she was more than ever convinced that he wanted to take in her inexperience; and she answered—"Very well, I will call your friend out of the other room."

"I don't want him," cried the disappointed Jew; and flung away down the stairs without waiting.

Marguerite opened the door leading from the drawing-room into that which was Doctor Pequinillo's dining-room when he

was in town, saying to M. de Benis, in the French tongue—"Your friend has gone, sir. I think he is very much in the wrong; for by less hasty proceedings he might perhaps gain what he wishes."

"He is no friend of mine, my dear young lady," said M. de Benis, coming forth; "but I have always remarked that those men who, when you are selling anything to them, require to have every *sous* drawn forth by laboured altercation, are the most peremptory and impatient, to all appearance, when they are selling anything to you. He will come back again, depend upon it. But he is no friend of mine, as I was saying just now—merely the man of the house where I lodge with my daughter; and, as I was anxious to give your excellent guardian the opportunity of purchasing his secret, if he likes, I sent him hither—perhaps a little too eagerly. I need hardly say that, if my life would purchase a happiness for Doctor Pequinillo, it would be hardly too great a sacrifice in re-

turn for all he did for me.—Doubtless he has told you the tale.”

“Not a word of it,” replied Marguerite. “But it must have been noble and kind, I am sure; for I know him. But he does such things in secret, my dear sir; and in revenge for his keeping such secrets from me, I have a very great mind to take this matter out of his hands, and act in it without his sanction.”

“Do not do so, without good advice,” observed M. de Benis. “Perhaps you do not know all the circumstances; and besides, if he is the party interested, he should certainly be consulted.”

Marguerite smiled.

“He is no more personally interested than yourself,” she replied. “But I know the gentleman who is, and where he is to be found—at least, I think so. But I will hurry away to his banker’s, and ascertain his real address; and then write, send, or go to him, as prudence, rashness, or caprice, may determine.”

"Be cautious—be cautious," said M. de Benis.

Marguerite mused.

"Caution is certainly needful," she said, at length ; "but decision may be needful too. This is a case in which I can easily conceive that other parties may be glad to get possession of the papers which this man possesses. Now, I do not know whether I dare take the liberty of asking you to befriend us in this matter?"

"As how?" asked M. de Benis.

"By giving us instant intelligence," said Marguerite, "of any negotiations you may hear of; and by delaying any definite resolution till we have time to consult and act. I will even go so far—" She paused, and hesitated for a moment; and then added, "Yes, I will even go so far as to say, that, in case of necessity, you may promise him the sum he has demanded, if he can be stopped by no other means. Only give me immediate intelligence."

"I must, in the first place, request

the honour of your address," said M. de Benis.

Marguerite gave it to him at once, and received his in exchange, parting with the old man well pleased with all she saw of his demeanour.

Without waiting longer for Doctor Pequinillo, and merely asking the maid to give her instant information of his return, she hurried away to the house of a banker in Saint James's Street, where she had heard from the Doctor that Julian Ludlow had an account. Her enquiry, as to whether he was still at Sittingbourne, was speedily answered.

"We had a letter from him at that place this morning," said the clerk; "but he directed us, madam, to write to him at Waldon in Surrey; and so I suppose he is there by this time."

Marguerite returned to Maddox Street, and found that Doctor Pequinillo had not yet come back; and, proceeding thence to her hotel, she spent the rest of the day in

an unpleasant state of hesitation. She turned and re-turned all the particulars of Julian's case in her mind : she anatomised, mentally, the character of Mr. Isaacson : she asked herself the probability of any one having heard that these papers were in his hands, and of his being able to strike a bargain with them so rapidly as to forestall her ; and, in the end, she resolved to wait for the return of Doctor Pequinillo, mistrusting her own judgment and her own information.

Men's resolutions always, and women's sometimes, are subject to alteration. Marguerite had retired to her bed-room, and very nearly to her bed, when her maid brought her a note in haste. It was in a strange hand ; and she first looked at the name of the writer, which was de Benis.

"I write to you in great haste, my dear young lady," said the old French gentleman, "to tell you that you had better act expeditiously. I have just had a long interview with my landlord, who has been out

the greater part of the evening. He informs me that he has already begun a bargain for the sale of the papers in his hands, and is quite sure of getting the sum he requires. I fear that what he says is true ; for he seems to me somewhat drunk and incautious. I have persuaded him, however, to promise that he will conclude nothing till to-morrow night, which I hope will give you time to see the persons interested, and to decide. I shall stay in all day to-morrow, and watch him; and you shall have the first intelligence of anything that transpires."

"No time is to be lost," said Marguerite. Then, turning to her maid, she added—

"Tell the people of the house to have horses put to my carriage to-morrow by seven o'clock."

CHAPTER XIV.

A LONG funeral procession had swept from the doors of Daynton House, and the chief mourner had returned alone. A travelling chariot, with servants in black, was waiting in the court, and everything was evidently prepared for a journey ; but Henry Denison went into the house, proceeded upstairs, and remained nearly three-quarters of an hour with his aunt before he descended to the library, where his destined travelling companion was waiting.

"Now, my dear sir," he said, addressing Doctor Pequinillo. "I am ready to go. I much wished Lady Daynton to see

you, in order to hear the same account which you have given me ; for she had some doubts as to the propriety of the course which I proposed to pursue ; but she is so much more deeply affected by our loss than I anticipated, that I cannot press her to do so."

"Nor is it, I think, desirable," rejoined Doctor Pequinillo. "I have always thought it best for men to act at once on their own sense of honor and right, with no counsellor but their own reason. When a man on a point of justice seeks all sorts of advice from others, he admits himself to be, in his own opinion, either a knave or a fool."

Henry Denison smiled slightly, but made no reply, although he did not altogether agree with the good Doctor's conclusion. He led the way towards the carriage, however ; and some time was passed in thought by both parties, as they rolled on together towards London.

At length the younger traveller turned to his companion, saying—

"One of my motives for going to town, and putting the investigation of this business in the hands of my solicitor, is this, my dear sir. If we went to Waldon, and saw Mistress Westwood and Julian, as you proposed, we should either have to shroud ourselves in an unpleasant mystery, or communicate all the facts which we have ascertained. Those facts are not yet sufficiently clear to be of any real relief to Julian's mind. They would only agitate him by alternations of hope and fear, which, to one of his susceptible character, would be more painful than the mere endurance of a blow already struck."

"But those facts must be told some time," replied Doctor Pequinillo ; "and we must not forget that they may never be made clear. We may find it impossible to prove that he is the child of your uncle Edward and Mary Westwood ; and what are we to do then ? Will it not be more terrible to him, at an after period, to believe that there is no real obstacle to his

marriage with her he loves, and yet not dare to marry, under fear of committing an awful crime? However, as we are on the road to London, let us go on. I will ask you merely, as we go, to stop at my house for a moment, as I may find intelligence there to affect our proceedings."

The carriage accordingly stopped in Maddox Street, and both the travellers got out. On Doctor Pequinillo's table was the same pile of letters which Marguerite had found there, now augmented by one or two others; but it was a small, beautifully addressed, neatly folded, nicely sealed note which the good Doctor first opened. It contained very few words; and he read them aloud:—

"Come to me instantly, if you arrive to-day. You may have got information; but I have got more. Do not delay, I beseech you, in coming to

"Your affectionate

"MARGUERITE."

"She has tidings—she has tidings," cried Doctor Pequinillo. "She never makes a mistake where a matter of kindness and friendship is concerned. Let us go to her, my good Sir—let us go to her instantly."

"With all my heart," replied Henry Denison. And the carriage was ordered to an hotel in St. James's Street.

They found Marguerite at home, and alone. She was springing with almost child-like joy into Doctor Pequinillo's arms, when she was suddenly stopped by the sight of Henry Denison following him. For one moment, however, there was an expression upon her countenance; which seemed to lend it a thousand times more beauty than it otherwise possessed; and there was a sparkle of unmistakeable admiration in the gentleman's eyes, as he advanced towards her, which instantly tamed her own look.

"I am very glad to see you both," she said. "First, because it shows me you are acting together in the way which I

hoped Mr. Denison would act, and knew that you, my dear friend, would act; and, in the next place, because I have intelligence for you both. Do you know, my dear Doctor, I have been bold enough to do all manner of things without your knowledge or advice. I thought I could conclude everything before you reached London, and had determined to give you a pleasant surprise; but I have not succeeded, I am sorry to say."

"Ah, Maggy—Maggy!" cried the Doctor. "You know you never could play the cups and balls, although I tried to teach you a thousand times. You always let the ball roll out of your fingers. But now tell us the whole. Make a clear, consecutive story of it; and then I will see what can be done."

"There is no time to be lost," said Marguerite. She then proceeded to relate briefly, but distinctly, all that had occurred since her arrival in London.

Besides what the reader already knows,

it amounted merely to these facts : that she had brought Julian to town ; that they had gone together to Mr. Isaacson, and had had a long conversation with him in the rooms of M. de Benis, and in the presence of that gentleman and his daughter ; and that Julian, with his impetuous disposition, had shown too much eagerness, which the Jew had instantly seized upon, and had begun to raise his demands. He said that a thousand pounds would have been all very well two days before, but that now he had a better offer ; and, changing altogether his tactics, instead of showing himself in haste to conclude a bargain, as he had seemed in dealing with Marguerite, he had been perfectly cool upon the subject, asserting that he could get two, if not three, thousand pounds for the papers at any time he pleased. In fact, with the skill of an angler playing with a fish, as soon as he found that he had got hold of the person most interested, he procrastinated, would not absolutely fix a sum, declared he must

have time to consider and consult, and managed to spin out three long interviews without coming to any conclusion.

Henry Denison smiled.

"He has been deceiving you and Julian, Mademoiselle," he said, quietly. "I will answer for it that the four persons who alone are interested in the production of these papers, are all of them equally anxious that all should have access to them; so that there can be no bidding against each other for their possession. I will go to the man myself, explain to him who and what I am, and show him at once that he will risk getting nothing by seeking to get too much. How they could fall into his possession is indeed very curious, and must be enquired into. I think you say he is a tailor."

"Something of the kind," replied Marguerite; "What we should call, in Paris, a 'costumier.' We have had to pass through the shop, for there is no private

door, and I saw a great number of all sorts of dresses hanging about."

"But where is Julian himself now?" asked Doctor Pequinillo. "Does he lodge here?"

"Oh no, my dear Doctor," replied Marguerite, with a gay laugh. "I have too much respect for my own little character, to bring him up to town with me in my carriage, and establish him in the same hotel. The good-natured world would have no difficulty in coupling that with the duel, and making a fine story of it. No—I sent him to lodge at Fenton's; and he has now gone, I believe, to find out a lawyer, to see if there be any possibility of bringing this Mr. Isaacson to terms through a third party."

"I think I had better be that third party," said Henry Denison; "and I will go at once if you will give me the man's address."

"Stay—stay!" ejaculated Doctor Pequinillo. "Several things must be considered :

first, the nature of these papers ; secondly, whether the man has any right to detain them ; thirdly, if he has, what it is worth while to give. In regard to the first point, the papers may be utterly valueless."

"I think that can hardly be," interposed Marguerite ; "for he seemed to know all about Julian's history ; told him the different places where he was educated ; knew the exact year of his birth ; and said they were worth ten thousand pounds to him, instead of three, if he knew all."

"More than that," said Henry Denison ; "but I can conceive no possible right this man can have to the papers ; and, if he does not give them up at once for a reasonable sum, I will threaten to compel him by law."

"In which case, he will burn them, before process served," said Doctor Pequillo.

"Then we will punish him," replied the other.

"You must first prove that he burnt

them, which would be no easy matter," rejoined the Doctor; "and, even if you should be able to do so, you would not, by punishing him, serve Julian. No, no—do not drive the man to extremes. These fellows are sometimes excessively vindictive. Go to him, if you will, my dear sir. You are more cool and phlegmatic than Julian; and you had better treat the matter with the most perfect air of indifference. Tell the good gentleman that you can divine all that the papers can tell, and know that their production may deprive you of a great deal; but that at the same time you have made up your mind to suffer the loss, and to see right done to the parties most interested; and then—"

"What then?" interrupted Henry Denison.

"Why, you won't succeed," replied Doctor Pequinillo. "It is like the famous receipt for dressing cucumbers. The fact is, my young friend, no man ever rightly and truly believes that another possesses

qualities which he does not possess himself. No rogue ever believes any other person an honest man. Mr. Isaacson, having but one motive, namely, self-interest, will believe that you are actuated by the same. He, being accustomed to affect indifference regarding what he most desires in the course of his traffic, will suppose that you are doing so in your dealings with him ; and he will be ready for you at all points. You will not succeed, I tell you ; and I shall have to go and deal with him. But it is as well that you should go and see."

"Well, is there any other means I can try?" said Henry Denison, seeing a great deal of reason in the Doctor's arguments.

"Why, if you were any other man," answered Doctor Pequinillo, "I might advise you to tell him some great and monstrous lie, such as this ; that authenticated copies of the papers are in existence, but that it would be more convenient to have the originals, or—"

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Marguerite. "Better pay him ten times the sum, than for any of you to be guilty of a falsehood. I would give the money myself, sooner."

Henry Denison looked at her with a well-pleased smile, not unnoticed by Doctor Pequinillo, who replied—

"You're an honest little fool, my dear Maggy; and I love you all the better for it. But this world is one great imposition—a mere conjurer's booth, where every man is playing sleight of hand tricks upon his neighbour—and every woman too, Mistress Margaret. We juggle with thoughts, feelings, looks, words—with ourselves, alas! as well as with others. Why, what am I, Margaret—I, your earliest friend, your protector, your counsellor? Nothing but an imposter; and that upon a small scale. What Napoleon Bonaparte was upon the great stage of the world, that is Doctor Pequinillo in a drawing-room—one a grand, the other a petty, cheat. There are but two occasions,

however, to speak seriously, on which I think it justifiable to use deceit. One is, when we do it for fun, and with our intention avowed, as I do; and the other, when we meet with a great rogue, who does his best to deceive us, and when we are driven, as it were, to use his own arms against himself."

"They are dangerous weapons for those who employ them, as well as for those against whom they are employed," observed Marguerite. And, looking down, she fell into a fit of thought.

"Well, my dear, I do not ask Mr. Denison to deceive the man," said Doctor Pequinillo. "I only tell him that, if he were another sort of person, such might be his course; that he will fail by any other method; and that I myself must take the matter in hand when he has tried it. I must do the best that I can, and get the papers as cheaply as possible. But mind, my young friend, that you do not promise the man anything exorbitant,

for that will tie my hands ; and remember that we need not be in a hurry, as there is no competitor in the field. And now, if you like to go, I will wait till you come back. The man's house is on the right hand side of the Strand, as you go down—the seventh or eighth corner. You will see a mask, and an indescribable imitation of a Spanish dress of green velvet, in the window. The name, Isaacson, is over the door.”

Henry Denison went away upon his errand, and Doctor Pequillo remained talking with Marguerite, making her give him all the minute details of the events which she had only related in general terms while her younger visitor was present.

“But did you see the papers, my dear? Did you see any of them?” asked the Doctor.

“No, I did not actually see them,” answered Marguerite. “He showed us a packet which he said contained them ; but we did not see what was in it.”

"What sort of a packet was it?" asked the Doctor.

"Oh, a little thing," replied Marguerite, "like a letter in an envelope. There could not be much in it. One of the ends seemed to be crumpled, as if it had been opened without breaking the seal."

"In white paper?" interrogated Doctor Pequinito.

"Yes," responded Marguerite, "quite white, and new, apparently."

"What colour was the seal?"

"Black," replied Marguerite; and then burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"Don't—don't, my dear Doctor," she cried. "I know what you are going to do, quite well. Pray don't."

"Pooh—pooh!" said Doctor Pequinito. "You mistake altogether, my dear. I will do nothing but what is quite right."

"Oh, I know," she said, "quite well. You intend to conjure it out of his desk, or off his table, or out of his hand, perhaps."

I believe you would steal a woman's heart out of her bosom, if you wanted it."

"Provided she had not given it to somebody else to keep," added Doctor Pequinillo, fixing his eyes upon her; then, suddenly turning them away again, he proceeded, "I will do nothing but that which is perfectly lawful and right, Mistress Prude. If I see the packet at all, I will take it away from him boldly, and by main force, even if I should break his back across my knee in doing it; for he has no right to keep it for a single hour. But I will use no sleight of hand, depend upon it."

"Well, well, I trust not," said Marguerite.

The conversation went on for a minute or two longer; and then Julian himself entered the room. Perhaps in bodily health he might seem somewhat improved; but the traces of wearing anxiety were strongly marked on his countenance; and Doctor Pequinillo applied himself, by a cheerful tone, and the

expression of good hopes, to relieve his mind as far as possible. Julian, however, was in a restless and unquiet state of mind; and, after remaining not more than a quarter of an hour, he arose, saying—

“I think I must go back to Walden to-night. I promised that I would not go away at all, without giving some hours’ notice. I was obliged, by circumstances, to break that promise, and have lingered on here, from day to day, in expectation of something being concluded. But I really can stay no longer.”

“You must stay over this day, at least, my young friend,” rejoined Doctor Pequinnillo. “I have something of much importance to say to you; and if you will go home for five minutes, I will join you there directly.”

Julian stood musing moodily, with his hat in his hand, for several minutes, quite lost in thought; and then, suddenly waking up, as if the words had just been spoken, he answered—

"Very well ; I will wait for you." And he left the room.

About half-an-hour afterwards, Henry Denison returned, looking a good deal disappointed.

"I am no match for Mr. Isaacson," he said. "I can make nothing of him. He was prepared at all points ; and my indifference had no apparent effect."

"You promised nothing—you promised nothing, I hope ?" said the Doctor.

"Nothing at all," replied Henry Denison. "He gave me no opportunity, seemed to grow in his expectations every moment, and said he would have his price, or burn the papers."

"I thought so," observed Doctor Pequillo. "Was there a fire in the shop ?"

"Yes, an open fire at the end of the counter," replied Henry Denison. "But he won't burn the papers unless he sees he cannot get any money."

"Well, then, I'll go to him," said the Doctor ; "and, strange to say, I shall take

impetuous Julian with me ; he's tamed enough now, poor fellow. Where shall I find you, Mr. Denison ?”

That gentleman gave his address at the town-house of the late Lord Daynton ; but, instead of departing with Doctor Pequinillo, he remained nearly an hour in conversation with Marguerite, evidently a good deal captivated by her beauty, grace, and those traits of her character with which he had become acquainted.

Now, though I have used the word “captivated,” I do not by any means intend to say that Henry Denison had fallen in love with the fair Marguerite. There are various motives and incentives for falling in love, none of which could affect a man of Henry Denison’s character so soon, except one : and that was, the inevitable necessity under which tall men lie, of marrying little women.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. LUDLOW had not left Mistress Westwood five minutes when Mary brought her mother the note she had received, saying, sorrowfully, as she gave it—"Julian is going away to-morrow early."

"I know it, my child," returned Mistress Westwood ; " and I am just going down to see him. I think it better for his sake, for your sake, Mary, and for all our sakes, to break through painful restraints and embarrassments at once, so that, when he judges it right to return, he may feel that I am ready to receive him as a son, and treat him as a mother."

"You are ever—ever kind, my dear mother," rejoined Mary. But she said no more, expressed no wish to go with her; and Mistress Westwood departed alone.

She was one of the very few people who really smother strong emotions. Thousands of those who pretend to smother them, have no strong emotions to smother. But Mistress Westwood felt truly and deeply, though a very strong sense of religion led her to subdue much, and to endure still more with patience.

Nevertheless, she was greatly agitated as the carriage rolled on towards Waldon village; and, if the reader will but picture to himself fully all the points of her relative situation with the young man she was going to see, he will easily comprehend that she had cause for agitation. She was glad that no eye was upon her; for some part of the way was passed in tears.

The carriage drew up at Mr. Ludlow's door. The carpenter's shop, and the yard full of timber and workmen—Oh, how well I re-

member both!—were still at the side of the house; but the servant rang the private bell. The maid, prompt and active as all Mrs. Ludlow's maids were, kept no one waiting, and was at the side of the carriage before the lady could alight.

"I wish to see Mr. Julian," said Mistress Westwood, in a perfectly calm tone. "Mr. Ludlow has returned, I suppose, from the Hall."

"He's gone back again, ma'am," answered the maid; "he thought he would catch you before you went out; for he wanted to tell you that Mr. Julian had gone in haste to London with a young lady—quite sudden."

"To London," was a guess of the girl's, and a good one.

Mistress Westwood looked surprised; but she asked no questions, and merely ordered the coachman to drive home again. She did not love concealments: she knew them to be very dangerous things; but in this instance she judged that it was best

not to tell her daughter the whole of the maid's reply, merely informing her that Julian had been obliged to go very suddenly to town.

Now, Mr. Ludlow had been at the house during her absence, having taken the short cut across the fields in the full expectation of finding her before she left; but I do not think he could have told any one at the Hall that Julian had set out with a young lady; first, because, as this whole tale evinces, he was a discreet man, very cautious of his speech; and secondly, because Mary evidently did not know, when her mother returned, that Julian had gone at all, but looked surprised, as well as disappointed, at the intelligence.

Some one, however, subsequently revealed the additional fact; for it reached Mary's ears that evening. It was the old Hebrew story of "The house that Jack built," over again. The footman heard the maid tell the tale; he told it to the housemaid, she to the butler, the butler to Mary's maid, she to

her mistress ; and thus poor Mary Westwood had a sleepless night and several anxious days ; for, although she had resolved, some time before, never to let one feeling of jealousy enter her bosom again, and though she had a note from Julian himself, apologizing for his breach of promise, on the plea of urgent necessity, and telling her he would be back in Waldon before his departure, she could not help asking herself frequently, who the woman was, who could have such an influence over Julian Ludlow. She dwelt upon the word "*young*," too. I will not exactly say that even an *old* woman might have led Julian from Dan to Beersheba, without Mary troubling her head about it ; for that, although very natural, would not be true ; but she certainly much wished that the maid had left out that word "*young*." By a strange instinct, she fixed at once upon the right person, and, in spite of all she had heard and all she knew, felt a sort of wild,

whirling apprehension at the idea of Marguerite having followed Julian from Paris. Her mood had many fits, however; and sometimes she gave herself up to pure despondency, asking, what she had to do with the matter—why she should care about Julian travelling to London with any woman; and, when this tendency was upon her, the reverie generally ended in tears.

Thus went by one, two, three, four days; and a fifth had dawned, and run its course well nigh half way, when Mistress Westwood suddenly entered the room where her daughter was sitting, bringing an open letter. Before recent occurrences, the sight of a letter in her mother's hand would have excited very small emotions in the bosom of Mary Westwood. It might have been anything—an invitation, an enquiry, a letter of business; but, by the sad experience of sorrow, we learn the expectation of evil; and when misfortunes have been often sudden, any-

thing that is sudden seems to foreshadow them.

Mary started, and looked in her mother's face. There was eagerness in it but neither grief nor apprehension ; and her first words dispelled Mary's alarm, more by the cheerful tone in which they were spoken, than by their mere meaning.

" Mary, my love," she said, " you must get ready to go to London directly. I have a summons here, which seems strange ; yet, from the character of the writer, and some of the words he uses, I shall certainly comply with his request."

" What does he say, mamma ?" asked Mary.

Mistress Westwood did not give her the letter ; but read a part of it aloud to the following effect :

" My dear Madam,

" Though comparatively a stranger to you, I take the liberty of

writing to request that you and your daughter would come up to London immediately on the receipt of this letter, which I forward by a special messenger. Nothing but the most urgent business would induce me to put you to this trouble and inconvenience ; but some questions are going on just now, greatly affecting the happiness of a very dear friend, on which, I think, you yourself may throw some light, or, at all events, can bear testimony to the hand-writing of various documents of great importance. Might I request you, also, if he be still in your service, to bring up with you a servant of the name of Willett; and it might also be advisable to have in town, for a day or two, a Mr. Brand, who I understand is your steward. His presence is not so immediately necessary; but I think it may be shortly. I have not time to explain all the circumstances which induce me to prefer this request ; but I think you will admit, when you hear them, that I am not altogether

unjustified in urging you strongly to come as speedily as possible. I trust this letter will reach you in time to permit of your arriving in London by three o'clock. I presume you will stay at the hotel where I once had the pleasure of seeing you; and, will, if possible, be there myself, waiting your arrival.

"I may add, that I saw my friend Julian Ludlow last night, looking, I am sorry to say, far from well; but I think I may take upon myself to prophesy that he will soon be restored to health."

Mistress Westwood read no farther; and indeed there was hardly more than a line of the letter to be read; but Mary, who had been listening attentively, instantly looked up, asking,

"Who is it from, dear mother?"

"It is signed 'Henry Denison,'" replied Mistress Westwood, who was evidently a good deal fluttered, as it is termed. "But

now, my dear Mary, make as much haste as possible. Ring for your maid. Let her pack up what is necessary, and we will set out at once. We will go the first stage with our own horses. I have already ordered four to be put to the carriage, which will be at the door in less than half-an-hour."

Mary had never seen her mother in such eager haste before, except upon one, and that a very sad, occasion; and she naturally enough concluded that there was more in the letter than had been read to her. It was very little, in truth. But it wakened strange expectations in Mistress Westwood's mind—expectations which she feared to communicate to her daughter, lest, as so frequently happens, they should be disappointed as soon as raised. The remaining words were—

"Mysteries are clearing up, and a bright prospect of hope and happiness is open

before him, at which no one more sincerely rejoices than

“Your faithful servant,

“HENRY DENISON.”

Whatever Mary might feel—and it must be acknowledged that her feelings were strangely divided between a desire to be in the same town with Julian Ludlow, and apprehension lest he should come to Waldon while they were away—the carriage rolled speedily, with Mistress Westwood and her daughter, from the door of the Hall; and Mary, under the influence of busy thought and rapid motion, began to experience that eager impatience—that sort of feeling of the chase—which Mistress Westwood seemed now to know, though she had known it very seldom.

The two maids were in the carriage, besides the two ladies; and there was consequently some restraint upon the conver-

sation. Mistress Westwood, being in delicate health, leaned back upon the cushions, and gave way to thought; while Mary, as thoughtfully, looked forth from the window, and saw the trees of the park pass rapidly before her eyes.

At length, as the carriage dashed out of the village of Waldon, Mary; turned to her mother, saying—

“Henry Denison! Did not somebody tell me that he had succeeded to his uncle, Lord Daynton? How happens he to sign himself Henry Denison?”

Mistress Westwood started, and, for an instant, a suspicion that a trick had been played upon her, crossed her mind. But the tone of the letter, and several circumstances connected with it, removed that idea immediately; and she replied—

“It was so stated in the newspaper some days ago. They said he had succeeded to the Barony in fee; but that the Earldom had become extinct. It is strange that he should sign his name Henry Denison; but

perhaps it was an oversight in the haste of writing; or else he may have supposed that we should not know him by his new title."

Mary fell into thought again, and was once more looking out of the window. About ten minutes after, the carriage passed by what is technically named, a chaise and pair; and Mary recognized the face of Mistress Ludlow as they drove on. At Ash Locombe they did not stop; and the town beyond was soon reached. Orders had been given for the utmost expedition to be used: the horses were put to with a rapidity purely English; and an hour more brought the carriage to Kingston-upon-Thames. It was now half-past one o'clock. There was ample time; but the same rapid progress was made onward; and, at a quarter to three, the carriage drew up opposite the hotel in Berkeley Square. A waiter, without a hat, was standing on the steps; and a tall, power-

ful, well-dressed man, with a hat, was standing beside him.

Mr. Willett and the other servant, who occupied the box of the carriage, jumped down to open the door; but, the moment they had done so, and Mistress Westwood and her daughter had alighted, the tall man, with the hat, advanced to the late Julian Westwood's servant, and enquired if his name were Willett. He was answered in the affirmative.

"Then I must trouble you to come with me directly," he rejoined. "I am a Bow Street officer—there is a subpoena."

"What's the matter? What have I done?" cried Willett.

"Done!—Nothing at all, sir.—You are going to do," replied the officer. "You are going to give evidence; and the case will come on at three.—Hi!—Cab!—Beg your pardon, ladies," he continued, as he saw Mistress Westwood and her daughter turn round aghast. "He'll be back directly. He's wanted for a little, and we have no time to spare."

A cab, which had been standing near the iron railings for half-an-hour, drew up as he spoke; and the officer, seeing Willett safely in, followed, and drove off with his evidence. Mistress Westwood, amidst the bows of the external and internal waiters, entered the hotel, saying to her daughter—"This is very strange!" and then enquired if any rooms had been engaged for her.

"Yes, ma'am—this way, ma'am," said the head-waiter; "the same you had when you were last here. Mr. Denison engaged them for you, this morning. He was here half-an-hour ago, expecting you; but he could not stop."

Mistress Westwood and her daughter walked up to their sitting-room, which was neatly and comfortably arranged. The baggage was then brought up by the porters, and soon distributed by the servants.

People with multitudinous domestics very

often lose more than they know. It would have been the greatest comfort in the world to Mary, at that moment, to unpack her own trunk ; and it might not have been unpleasant to Mistress Westwood to have anything on earth to do. But there they sat, with no food for thought but expectation, and that of the most vague and indefinite kind. We fashion pictures in the embers of the fire. We see, in clouds, faces, figures, and things, that are "dragonish." We find out castles, and turrets, and domes, and ruined churches, in the craggy ridge, or on the broad face of the mountain. But for all the aerial painting and sculpture of fancy, nothing supplies such abundant materials as expectation. On the canvas of the mind we paint ; and the figures are sweet or terrible, as hope or apprehension wills.

With such employment alone, did Mistress Westwood and her daughter fill up the next two hours and a half. It was beginning to grow dusk, and Mistress

Westwood was just going to ring for lights, when the waiter threw open the door, announcing the Earl of Daynton.

Mistress Westwood rose, and Mary raised her eyes languidly, but the next instant started eagerly up; for Henry Denison and Julian Ludlow entered the room together.

"My Lord, I am very happy to see you," said Mistress Westwood, extending her hand to Henry. "Oh, Julian, this is indeed a pleasure!"

"You mistake, my dear madam," said Henry Denison. "The peerage has passed from me. *This* is the Earl of Daynton—your nephew, and my dear cousin, and your cousin also, Miss—" Westwood he was going to add; but Julian's arms were already around her; and it was well they were, though Mary was not sensible of their pressure.

CHAPTER XVI.

WE must retrace our steps for about four-and-twenty hours, and, taking up the history of Doctor Pequinillo, briefly relate what has occurred to him and Julian Ludlow during the intervening space of time.

From Marguerite's hotel, the Doctor walked with a sedate and considerate pace to that of Julian ; spoke to him for five minutes, enquiring particularly into all that had passed between him and Mr. Isaacson ; and concluded a sort of brief cross-examination by saying,

"Then, my dear friend, you have not the slightest doubt that these papers refer

to your father's marriage and your own birth?"

"Not the slightest," answered Julian, "although I cannot conceive how this man has possessed himself of them."

"Under these circumstances, we must apply for a search-warrant," said Doctor Pequinillo. "As to how Mr. Isaacson got them, never mind, at present. I know all about that, and see the whole matter quite clearly. Put on your hat, and come with me. You have had a fair chance of getting them; Henry Denison has had a fair chance. It is now *my* turn: so, remember, *I* am commander-in-chief, and must have everybody obey my orders to the letter. I luckily know two of the magistrates."

"I don't think they will grant a warrant," said Julian.

"Yes, they will," said Doctor Pequinillo.

"I have taken Blackstone's advice, and studied the law, at least sufficiently to see

my way in this matter. Bow Street is close to the Jew's house, luckily. Come along."

Doctor Pequinillo and Julian readily found one of his friends of the Bench, and the Doctor laid his case before him, citing volubly enough the statute seventh and eighth, George the Fourth, cap. twenty-nine, section sixty-three ; and the thirtieth, George the Second, cap. twenty-four.

The Magistrate smiled at Doctor Pequinillo's learning, saying—

"I see you know something of law beyond Bartlemy Fair law, my good sir ; but the matter is very clear. If I understand you rightly, this gentleman is ready to swear that Mr. Isaacson has on his premises property unlawfully in his possession, and obtained either by larceny or false pretences, to the best of his knowledge and belief. We do not require him to state positively ; for your statement, I think, is very clear. I will grant the war-

rant, and give him an officer ; for it is much better that the complainant should go with the warrant, in order to identify the property."

"How long will it be?" asked Doctor Pequinillo.

"Not five minutes," answered the Magistrate.

"Then I will go on first," said Doctor Pequinillo ; "for if we can obtain the papers by fair means, I should prefer it."

"Take care what you do," said the Magistrate. "Mr. Isaacson is a pugnacious personage. We know him here quite well."

"I am more than his match," answered Doctor Pequinillo. "You follow with the officer, Julian, and just show yourself at the door of the shop when you arrive."

"Keep an eye upon him," said Julian ; "for he has more than once threatened to burn the papers."

The Doctor nodded his head, and walked

away, turning his steps straight to the shop of Mr. Isaacson.

That worthy was, as usual, busy at his counter, and his shop-boy as busy, poking over old clothes in the shop behind, with the tide of human life rushing on unnoticed before their dwelling.

"Ah, good morning, Mr. Isaacson," said Doctor Pequinillo. "I have come to you about those papers you want to sell me. I have been out of town, or I should have come before."

The man gave him a very surly answer, saying he might have them if he would pay the price down upon the nail; but Doctor Pequinillo soon engaged him in conversation, and, at length, when he thought that Julian must be approaching, asked distinctly what he demanded.

"What will you give?" quoth the Jew.

"That depends upon what they are," answered Doctor Pequinillo. "Let me see them."

"I dare say," retorted the Jew.

"Why, I am told," answered the Doctor, "that what you showed my friend, Julian Ludlow—"

"Ah, they'll make his fortune, if he gets them," interrupted Mr. Isaacson.

"How can I tell that?" demanded the Doctor. "I am informed the whole packet seems no bigger than a note. What we want, consists of three papers."

"It's not true," replied the Jew. "The packet's five times as big as a note. There are more than three papers in it."

As he spoke, he approached his desk at the end of the counter, near the fire-place, lifted the lid, put his hand in, and drew forth a packet, saying—

"There, you may look at the outside—I don't mind that; but I'm not going to be told that they are not what you want, when you see them, and know all about them. You can't do me, any of you."

"I don't want to do you," returned the

Doctor. "All I want to know is, that you don't do *me*. Did you ever buy a coat without looking through it to see that it wasn't fine-drawn?"

The Jew laughed, but answered, that was quite different. Doctor Pequinillo denied the proposition; and some rather jocular sparring took place between them.

During all this time, the Doctor kept his position half way between the desk and the shop-window; and the Jew advanced gradually to a spot opposite to him, holding the small packet tightly in his hand. The Doctor even drew a step back, as if to put the man's mind at ease regarding his treasure.

"Come, come!" said Doctor Pequinillo. "Let us strike a bargain, Mr. Isaacson. Say your word."

"Well, three thousand pounds," said Mr. Isaacson. "Not a penny less."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"You know quite well you cannot do anything with them, if you do not sell them to us."

"Why not?" cried Mr. Isaacson, furiously. "They are my property."

"No, they are not," returned Doctor Pequillo. "You found them in the pocket of Mr. Westwood's coat, which Willett sold to you. He didn't sell you the papers: he could not; for they were not his to sell; and, as muniments of title, they are property, and you can be punished for detaining them."

"I don't know what you call *monuments*; but he sold me all that was *in* the coat and *on* the coat; and if you talk about punishing me, I'll put them in that fire in one minute. What will you give?—that's the question."

Doctor Pequillo saw a figure pass the window; and he replied, with a slight smile, "I'll give fifty pounds."

The Jew looked at him with indignant amazement.

"You had better take it," said Doctor Pequinillo, coolly ; "for a search-warrant is out, and the officer is at the door."

Isaacson gave one look towards the street, and then darted, with the spring of a snake, towards the fire-place.

Doctor Pequinillo was prepared. At a single bound, he cleared the counter, lighted between the desk and the Jew, and seized him by the throat. He struggled fiercely : Julian and the officer rushed in ; and, as a last effort of vengeance, Isaacson, finding himself overmatched, threw the packet into the grate, screaming to his shop-boy—

"Poke it in—poke it in !"

The boy darted forward to obey : Julian and the officer hurried up : Doctor Pequinillo let go his hold, and turned to save the papers ; and a fierce struggle and rush took place round the fire, in the course of which Julian knocked down Mr. Isaacson with a blow, which considerably disfigured his beautiful countenance.

"Here it is—here it is!" cried the officer, holding up the packet, with no further injury than a slight scorch at one corner.

"Who are *you*?" cried Mr. Isaacson, furiously, wiping the blood from his nose.

"Don't you know, Judy?" asked the officer, with a laugh. "Why, I've had you up before now. I'm a police constable."

"Well, then, I charge this man with assaulting me in my own house!"

"Pooh—pooh!" exclaimed the other. "You were resisting an officer in the execution of his duty."

"I was not," retorted the Jew. "I did not know who you were. You showed no warrant. You've shown none yet."

"You haven't given us time, Judy," said the officer. "You're so quick.—There's the warrant."

"Well, I hadn't seen it," said the other, "nor these men either; and I charge them both with assault, and an attempt to rob me of my property in my own house."

"Why, you don't mean it, Judy?" said the officer.

"I do," replied Isaacson. "I make the charge; and if you don't take it, I'll have you punished."

The officer looked somewhat blank; but, after a moment's consideration, he said, "Well, then, come and make it before the magistrate.—I am afraid, gentlemen, I must trouble you to step with me." And he added, in a low tone to Julian, "He's a troublesome customer, I can tell you; but we have got the papers, and that is something."

The whole party then moved off to Bow Street. The magistrate who had granted the warrant was gone; but another, who was present, received Mr. Isaacson's charge; took the evidence of the police officer; read one or two of the papers contained in the packet; and then adjourned the case to the following day at three o'clock, taking light bail for the appearance of Julian and Doctor Pequillo.

I need not enter into all the details of the examination which took place on the following day : that is, on the day of Mistress Westwood's arrival in London. The magistrate, who was the same under whose hand the search-warrant had been granted, doubted that Mr. Isaacson would appear at all to prosecute the charge ; but the officers knew better ; and, two minutes before the hour, the Jew Costumier was in the court, with his eye covered with a patch, and his head bound up with bandages. Though the case was very simple, it took some time to dispose of ; for the Jew was clamorous and long-winded, and was supported by an attorney of his own nation, who tried very hard to make a case. It was proved, however, that no greater force was used towards him than was necessary to prevent him and his boy from destroying the papers, and that he had been warned that an officer with a search warrant was entering his shop when he attempted to commit the act ; and the magistrate ob-

served that the charge of robbery, on which he insisted, though in his opinion it could not be sustained for a moment, might be affected by the question of whether the papers were lawfully in his possession or not. If they were his, he had certainly a right to burn them, or do anything with them he pleased. If they were not his, there could not be a question upon the subject.

Mr. Willett was then brought forward, and deposed that he had sold to Mr. Isaacson the wardrobe of his late master, which had been given to him by his mistress without any knowledge that the coat which Mr. Westwood wore, at the time of the accident by which he received his death, had any papers in it. He was certain, he said, that there was nothing in the two outside pockets, he having removed from them a newspaper, three letters, and a pocket-handkerchief, which he had delivered to his mistress ; but he had some recollection of there having been an inside

pocket in some of his master's coats, in which probably the papers had been placed for security.

"They will very likely speak for themselves," said the Magistrate. "As yet, we do not know, except from the statements made by the complainant, that the papers were ever in Mr. Westwood's possession at all. They may be Mr. Isaacson's own, for aught we know. Let them be produced."

The packet was handed up by the officer; and the Magistrate, without ceremony, opened it, and examined the contents. The first which he looked at, was a certificate of the marriage of Edward Escot to Mary Westwood.

"Is any representative of these parties present?" asked the Magistrate, after reading it aloud.

"I am Mr. Escot's nephew," said Henry Denison; "and beside me, I believe, stands his son."

"Hand the paper to Mr. Denison," said

the Magistrate. "It certainly does not belong to Mr. Isaacson."

The next paper was a certificate, under the hand of a physician, a nurse, and a third person named Elizabeth Matthews, of the birth of the son of Edward Escot and Mary his wife, with a minute and particular description of the child, and a statement of the place of birth, as well as the day, hour, and various other particulars ; and then a certificate, under the hand of a clergyman, that he had half baptized the son of Edward and Mary Escot, upon a promise that the rite should be fully completed in church, according to the Book of Common Prayer.

The packet contained a fourth paper, being a solemn declaration, signed "Julian Westwood," and giving a brief but accurate account of his sister's private marriage, at his urgent entreaty and suggestion, with his friend Edward Escot ; of Julian's birth, and all the circumstances attending it ; of his placing the child himself with Henry

Ludlow, carpenter in the village of Waldon, who had just lost his own child, and who agreed to pass Julian as his ; and of every other step in Julian's education up to the time of his, Mr. Westwood's, journey to Italy. This declaration appeared to have been made by Mr. Westwood in the presence of a brother magistrate ; and to it the declarant had appended a long note, containing various details and explanations, and expressive of his deep regret at having, in the zeal of his friendship for Edward Escot, persuaded his sister, contrary to her better feelings, to the only act which she had ever committed that could give pain to their venerable father.

The Magistrate did not read the whole of this paper aloud ; but looked through it carefully, and then said—" I should like to have some one who can swear to the handwriting of the late Julian Westwood, Esquire, of Waldon Hall, in the County of Surrey."

" *I can swear to it, sir,*" cried Willett.

"And so can I," said the voice of Julian behind.

"One will do," said the Magistrate; and Willett accordingly testified to his late master's handwriting.

"Give the paper to either of those gentlemen," said the Magistrate, pointing to Julian and Henry. "Mr. Isaacson could have no property in those documents. The charge is dismissed."

"Will your worship please," said the attorney of the complainant, "to—"

"Mr. Levi, you had better hold your tongue," said the Magistrate, interrupting the lawyer. "I am just thinking whether we cannot find a law to fit your client. I don't think that I should have far to go; and so you had better let well alone."

Mr. Levi took the hint: he and the shop-boy pulled Mr. Isaacson away; and Julian and his friends retired from the Court, very well satisfied with the result.

CHAPTER XVII.

Now for a broom ; and let us sweep out the ball-room as speedily as possible.

About six weeks after the events which we have just related, Mademoiselle Marguerite sat in her own little drawing-room at Paris, with Doctor Pequinillo, just arrived from England, by her side. He had told her that the title of Julian Escot, as we must now call him, to the rank and station of Earl of Daynton, had been made clear and perfect ; and that his marriage with Mary Westwood was to take place in six months. He had given her some long and some amusing details regarding all

the researches and investigations which had taken place ; and he ended by saying —“ And now, Maggy, what do you intend to do with yourself? You wrote me word you had great schemes in hand ; and so I came over in haste.”

“ I intend to quit the stage for ever,” replied Marguerite. “ I have made quite enough to live upon comfortably and happily ; and I wish to buy myself a neat little cottage in England, with a pretty garden round it and plenty of books in it, and to live tranquilly and privately for the rest of my little life.”

“ Ah, Maggy—Maggy !” said the Doctor, shaking his head. “ I know that Henry Denison is in Paris.”

“ You are quite mistaken, my dear Doctor,” said Marguerite, eagerly—“ mistaken in him, and in me. I know he is in Paris, for he has called upon me twice ; but he never even dreams of proposing to marry an Opera dancer ; and I would not marry him if he did.”

"Well, I wish you would marry some one," said the Doctor, with a sigh. "You are a dear, good girl, and would make any man very happy."

The blood came a little into Marguerite's face; but she looked at her friend, with a glance half arch, half rueful, saying—"I will certainly never marry any one but you. How can you expect, you odd old man, after having accustomed me all my life to your eccentricity and your wisdom, your fun and your seriousness, your rashness and your prudence, your tricks and your virtues, that I should ever be contented with anyone else? You might as well bring up a child upon curry, and then expect it to be satisfied with pap."

"Margaret, Margaret! are you serious?" asked the Doctor, with his eyes full of eagerness. "Have you well considered?"

"I have considered everything," answered Marguerite, almost petulantly; "and I consider you a very unreasonable man, who, because he does not choose to do

anything like anybody else, will not marry a woman unless she proposes to him, and a woman whom he loves, too ; for I know you love me, let you say what you will." And Marguerite burst into tears.

"I do love you—I do love you!" cried the Doctor, throwing his arms round her. "I have always loved you, Margaret ; but ought I not to consider before myself the woman whom I love?"

"That's one of your oddities," said Marguerite, drying her eyes. "Nobody else does so, and I wish you hadn't considered me half so much ; for then we should have been married five years ago."

"Well, we'll be married now," said the Doctor, kissing her, "and as fast as possible ; and you shall quit the stage for ever."

"And you shan't conjure any more, nor make fountains," said Marguerite.

"And you shall have your cottage, and your books, and your husband to boot," cried the Doctor.

"And you shall shave off your mustachio's," said Marguerite.

"And leave off the wig," added the Doctor, in a solemn tone ; "and drop the Pequinitillo."

And so it was.

THE END.

